



# GANDHI MEMORIAL

## PEACE NUMBER

EDITED BY  
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THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY  
SANTINIKETAN

2 OCTOBER 1949

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY  
PRABHATKUMAR MUKHOPADHYAYA  
SANTINIKETAN PRESS, SANTINIKETAN

## PREFACE

LATE in 1947 we began to consider the possibilities of building up a forum for the peace-makers of the world whence sprang the idea of a homage volume of essays commemorating the greatest modern apostle of peace—Mahatma Gandhi. The Foreword by Dr. Rajendra Prasad tells the story of this idea and the part it is intended to play in the preparations for the forthcoming meeting of the world's peace-makers at Santiniketan.

The enthusiasm shown by many leading and distinguished thinkers and workers for peace who were consulted, and the obvious sincerity with which they offered to co-operate, has made the work on this enterprise a rare and genuine pleasure.

Perhaps no tribute to the Mahatma and to his invaluable contributions to Peace and Reconciliation could be more appropriate than a co-operative endeavour like this collection in which so many pacifists and followers of Gandhiji—every one eminent in his own field—have come together and offered some of their best contributions in a common concern for peace and goodwill among men.

By so doing they have built a golden bridge across the narrow and racial boundaries, welding the various peoples of the world in a spiritual fraternity which is symbolic of the whole life of Gandhiji himself. The fellowship thus established seems to offer the best guarantee for that spirit of international understanding on which alone the peace of the world can be founded.

In planning the publication we have tried, as far as practicable, to group subjects of kindred interest together. These sections are punctuated with a number of hymns and songs—favourites of the Mahatma—which are intended to indicate the mood and temper of a particular section as a whole.

To our distinguished contributors we offer our heart-felt thanks for their willing co-operation. The Editor's special thanks are due to Mr Horace Alexander and Sri S. K. George for their constant help and valuable advice.

THE EDITOR.

Santiniketan  
*2 October, 1949*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT for their kindness in permitting the use of copyright material is due to Navajivan Karyalaya, Ahmedabad for selections from Gandhiji's writings ; to the *Vedanta and the West*, Los Angeles for Aldous Huxley's 'A Note on Gandhi' ; to the *Hibbert Journal*, London for 'Mahatma Gandhi' by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan ; to Hind Kitabs, Bombay for 'Tagore and Gandhi' by Krishna Kripalani ; to the *Indian P. E. N.* for Sophia Wadia's address and U. K. Oza's English rendering of the hymn 'Vaishnava Jana to' ; to International Literary Pool for 'Gandhiji and Indian Civilization' by Louis Renou ; to Macmillan & Co., Ltd. for 'When the Heart Is Hard' (from *Gitanjali*) by Rabindranath Tagore ; to George Allen & Unwin Ltd. for 'Victory to the Victim' (from *The Child*) by Rabindranath Tagore ; and to Satis C. Guha for sending the English version of 'Mahatma Gandhi and Religion' by Satischandra Mukerji (first published in Danish translation in the *Nye Vege*, September and October, 1929). The articles by Satischandra Das Gupta and Nirmalchandra Chattopadhyaya have been rendered into English for this Number by Jitendranarayan Sen and Golok Mazumdar respectively, and we have used Indira Devi's translation ('O Heart of Mine') of Rabindranath Tagore's 'Bharat-tirtha'.



## FOREWORD

THE idea of a World Pacifist Meeting was originally conceived, as readers of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* and the public are well aware, to provide an opportunity for devoted workers for peace all over the world to meet and discuss with Gandhiji the ways of achieving a Pacifist World Order. In spite of his passing away it was felt that the project should be pushed through, especially in view of the mounting threats to peace everywhere. It was also felt that the original intention should be adhered to of holding the meeting in Santiniketan, a place hallowed by the memory of such prophets and pioneers of cultural and racial reconciliation as Gurudeva Tagore, Dinabandhu Andrews and other devoted workers there. But it was later realized that sufficient preparatory work had not been done for such a significant gathering and therefore it had to be regretfully decided to postpone the meeting to December next.

The interval thus gained is none too long for the very strenuous work that has to be done to make the Conference a real contribution to the cause of World Peace. Sufficient funds to cover the expenses of the meeting ought to be collected in good time to relieve the organisers of anxiety on that score. Even more important is the preparation of the minds of people all over the world for the consideration and acceptance of the things that pertain to peace.

Mahatma Gandhi stood for eternal principles—*Satya* and *Ahimsa*. He practised them in his own life and his actions were prompted by these faiths. He brought them to bear upon all human problems and wanted society to be fashioned according to these principles. And he made the supreme sacrifice in such endeavours. We cannot any more have his guidance so far as his physical presence is concerned, but his message remains and it is now our responsibility to spread and perpetuate it, so that it may permeate all our activities.

The path followed by Gandhiji is the one that can lead to lasting peace and ensure happiness for mankind and any effort to propagate his ideals is always welcome and of great value. Work has already been taken in hand in this direction and pamphlets on the sanctions for, and implications of, Pacifism are already in the press.

Foremost among such preparatory material is the Mahatma Number of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*. Originally designed as a Peace Number, it has appropriately been converted into a Mahatma Memorial Number after the passing away of the Apostle of Peace. In addition to tributes to the person and work of the Mahatma, it contains a large and varied collection of articles devoted to the problems of peace. Among the contributors are many leaders of thought and action in India and abroad. I feel it is a publication worthy of the name it commemorates, and of the institution it represents, and will be a valuable contribution to the cause of peace in this generation. I commend it to all thoughtful minds in the world to-day.

RAJENDRA PRASAD

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The world to-day is wild with the delirium of hatred,  
the conflicts are cruel and unceasing in anguish,  
crooked are its paths, tangled its bonds of greed.  
All creatures are crying for a new birth of thine,  
Oh Thou of boundless life,  
save them, rouse thine eternal voice of hope,  
let Love's lotus with its inexhaustible treasure of honey  
open its petals in thy light.

O Serene, O Free,  
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness  
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

Thou giver of immortal gifts  
give us the power of renunciation  
and claim from us our pride.  
In the splendour of a new sunrise of wisdom  
let the blind gain their sight  
and let life come to the souls that are dead.

O Serene, O Free,  
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness  
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

Man's heart is anguished with the fever of unrest,  
with the poison of self-seeking,  
with a thirst that knows no end.  
Countries far and wide flaunt on their foreheads  
the blood-red mark of hatred.  
Touch them with thy right hand,  
make them one in spirit,  
bring harmony into their life,  
bring rhythm of beauty.

O Serene, O Free,  
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness  
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



**GANDHI  
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## HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH

### SELECTIONS FROM THE SAYINGS OF GANDHIJI

I AM a man of peace, I believe in peace. But I do not want peace at any price. I do not want the peace you find in stone ; I do not want the peace that you find in the grave ; but I do want the peace which you find embedded in the human breast which is exposed to the arrows of a whole world, but which is protected from all harm by the Power of the Almighty God.

*Young India : 19-1-22*

#### *Non-violence and India's freedom:*

I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.

I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For, *satyagraha* and its offshoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance, are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

*Young India : 11-8-20*

You might of course say that there can be no non-violent rebellion and there has been none known to history. Well, it is my ambition to provide an instance, and it is my dream that my country may win its freedom through non-violence. And, I would like to repeat to the world times without number, that I will not purchase my country's freedom at the cost of non-violence. My marriage to non-violence is such an absolute thing that I would rather commit suicide than be deflected from my position. I have not mentioned truth in this connection, simply because truth cannot be expressed excepting by non-violence.

*Young India : 12-11-31*

*Non-violence, the only guarantee of Democracy:*

True democracy or the Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa*.

*Harijan : 27-5-39*

*Satyagraha, the Moral Equivalent of War:*

Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason. Nobody has probably drawn up more petitions or espoused more forlorn causes than I and I have come to this fundamental conclusion that if you want something really important to be done you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head but the penetration of the heart comes from

suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.

*Young India: 5-11-31*

The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice.

*Young India: 19-2-25*

Non-violence is not a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness. On the contrary, the non-violence of my conception is a more active and real fight against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and therefore a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edge weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this is an ideal state. And so it is.

*Young India: 8-10-25*

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its re-generation.

Never has anything been done on this earth without direct action. I reject the word 'passive resistance', because

of its insufficiency and its being interpreted as a weapon of the weak.

*Young India: 12-5-20*

I am more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in the prevention of the sufferings of my own people. I know that people who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity; but I also know that people who become brutalized in their desperate efforts to get victory over their opponents or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also. And it cannot be a matter of pleasure to me or anyone else to see human nature dragged to the mire. If we are all sons of the same God and partake of the same divine essence, we must partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race. You can understand how repugnant it must be to invoke the beast in any human being, how much more so in Englishmen, among whom I count numerous friends.

*Young India: 29-10-31*

To quell riots non-violently there must be true *ahimsa* in one's heart, an *ahimsa* that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace. Such an attitude cannot be cultivated. It can only come as a result of prolonged and patient effort which must be made during peaceful times. The would-be member of a peace brigade should come into close touch and cultivate acquaintance with the so-called *goonda* element in his vicinity. He should know all and be known to all and win the hearts of all by his living and selfless service. No section should be regarded as too contemptible or mean to mix with. *Goondas* do not drop from the sky, nor do they spring from the earth like evil spirits. They are the product of social disorganization and society is therefore responsible for their existence. In other words they should be looked upon as a symptom of corruption in

our body politic. To remove the disease we must first discover the underlying cause. To find the remedy will then be a comparatively easy task.

*Harijan: 15-9-40*

*Attitude towards the two World Wars:*

One's life is not a single straight line ; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another. As a citizen not then, and not even now, a reformer leading an agitation against the institution of war, I had to advise and lead men who believed in war but who from cowardice or from base motives or from anger against the British Government refrained from enlisting. I did not hesitate to advise them that so long as they believed in war and professed loyalty to the British Constitution they were in duty bound to support it by enlistment.

*Young India: 5-11-25*

Life is governed by a multitude of forces. It would be smooth sailing, if one could determine the course of one's actions only by one general principle whose application at a given moment was too obvious to need even a moment's reflection. But I cannot recall a single act which could be so easily determined.

Being a confirmed war resister I have never given myself training in the use of destructive weapons in spite of opportunities to take such training. It was perhaps thus that I escaped direct destruction of human life. But so long as I lived under a system of government based on force and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for me, I was bound to help that government to the extent of my ability when it engaged in a war, unless I non-co-operated with that government and renounced to the utmost of my capacity the privileges it offered me.

If there was a national government, whilst I should not take any direct part in any war, I can conceive occasions

when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it. For I know that all its members do not believe in non-violence to the extent I do. It is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.

Non-violence works in a most mysterious manner. Often a man's actions defy analysis in terms of non-violence; equally often his actions may wear the appearance of violence when he is absolutely non-violent in the highest sense of the term and is subsequently found so to be. All I can then claim for my conduct is that it was, in the instances cited, actuated in the interests of non-violence. There was no thought of sordid national or other interest. I do not believe in the promotion of national or any other interest at the sacrifice of some other interest.

The light within me is steady and clear. There is no escape for any of us save through truth and non-violence. I know that war is wrong, is an unmitigated evil. I know too that it has got to go. I firmly believe that freedom won through bloodshed or fraud is no freedom. *Would that all the acts alleged against me were found to be wholly indefensible rather than that by any act of mine non-violence was held to be compromised* or that I was ever thought to be in favour of violence or untruth in any shape or form! Not violence, not untruth, but non-violence, truth, is the law of our being.

*Young India: 13-9-28*

And yet, strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the Allies. Willynilly this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler.

*Harijan: 30-9-39*

Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for, it is even the duty of, a believer in *ahimsa* to distinguish between the aggressor and

the defender. Having done so, he will side with the defender in a non-violent manner, i.e. give his life in saving him. His intervention is likely to bring a speedier end to the duel and may even result in bringing about peace between the combatants.

*Harijan: 21-10-39*

I do not want England to be defeated or humiliated. It hurts me to find St. Paul's Cathedral damaged. It hurts me as much as I would be hurt if I heard that the Kashi Vishvanath temple or the Juma Masjid was damaged. I would like to defend both the Kashi Vishvanath temple and the Juma Masjid and even St. Paul's with my life, but would not take a single life for their defence. That is my fundamental difference with the British people. My sympathy is there with them nevertheless. Let there be no mistake on the part of Englishmen, Congressmen, or others whom my voice reaches, as to where my sympathy lies. It is not because I love the British nation and hate the German. I do not think that the Germans as a nation are any worse than the English, or the Italians are any worse. We are all tarred with the same brush; we are all members of the vast human family. I decline to draw any distinctions. I cannot claim any superiority for Indians. We have the same virtues and the same vices. Humanity is not divided into watertight compartments so that we cannot go from one to another. They may occupy one thousand rooms, but they are all related to one another. I would not say, 'India should be all in all, consistently with the well-being of other nations of the world. I can keep India intact and its freedom also intact only if I have goodwill towards the whole of the human family and not merely for the human family which inhabits this little spot of earth called India. It is big enough compared to other smaller nations, but what is India in the wide world or in the universe?

*Harijan: 29-9-40*

What policy the National Government will adopt I cannot say. I may not even survive it, much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the effort for the last twenty-two years to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country. In every case a Free India in alliance with the Allied powers must be of great help to their cause, whereas India held in bondage as she is today must be a drag upon the war-chariot and may prove a source of real danger at the most critical moment.

*Harijan: 21-6-42*

*My Dream:*

Before I ever knew anything of politics in my early youth, I dreamt the dream of communal unity of the heart. I shall jump in the evening of my life, like a child, to feel that the dream has been realized in this life. The wish for living the full span of life, portrayed by the seers of old and which they permit us to set down at 125 years, will then revive. Who would not risk sacrificing his life for the realization of such a dream? Then we shall have real Swaraj. Then though legally and geographically we may still be two states, in daily life no one will think that we were separate states. The vista before me seems to me to be, as it must be to you, too glorious to be true. Yet like a child in a famous picture, drawn by a famous painter, I shall not be happy till I have got it. I live and want to live for no lesser goal. Let the seekers from Pakistan help me to come as near the goal as it is humanly possible. A

goal ceases to be one, when it is reached. The nearest approach is always possible. What I have said holds good irrespective of whether others do it or not. It is open to every individual to purify himself or herself so as to render him or her fit for that land of promise. I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads: 'If there is paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.' That Fort with all its magnificence at its best, was no paradise in my estimation. But I should love to see that verse with justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan at all the entrances. In such paradise, whether it is in the Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks or drugs. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions, as mother, sister or daughter according to her age. Where there will be no untouchability and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all proudly, joyously and voluntarily bread labourers. I hope everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me, if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling life-giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy. Let this assure the doubters and sceptics that I have not the slightest desire that the fast should be ended as quickly as possible. It matters little if the ecstatic wishes of a fool like me are never realized and the fast is never broken. I am content to wait as long as it may be necessary, but it will hurt me to think that people have acted merely in order to save me. I claim that God has inspired this fast and it will be broken only when and if He wishes it. No human agency has ever been known to thwart, nor will it ever thwart, the Divine Will.

*Delhi Diary: 14-1-48*

## GANDHI THE MAN

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

AFTER my return to India from some months' touring in the West, I found the whole country convulsed with the expectation of an immediate independence—Gandhiji had promised Swaraj in one year—by the help of some process that was obviously narrow in its scope and external in its observance.

Such an assurance, coming from a great personality, produced a frenzy of hope even in those who were ordinarily sober in their calculation of worldly benefits; and they angrily argued with me that in this particular case it was not a question of logic, but of a spiritual phenomenon that had a mysterious influence and miraculous power of prescience. This had the effect of producing a strong doubt in my mind about Mahatmaji's wisdom in the path he chose for attaining a great end through satisfying an inherent weakness in our character which has been responsible for the age-long futility of our political life.

We who often glorify our tendency to ignore reason, installing in its place blind faith, valuing it as spiritual, are ever paying for its cost with the obscuration of our mind and destiny. I blamed Mahatmaji for exploiting this irrational force of credulity in our people, which might have had a quick result in a superstructure, while sapping the foundation. Thus began my estimate of Mahatmaji, as the guide of our nation, and it is fortunate for me that it did not end there.

Gandhiji, like all dynamic personalities, needed a vast medium for the proper and harmonious expression of his creative will. This medium he developed for himself, when he assumed the tremendous responsibility of leading the whole country into freedom through countless social ditches and fences and unlimited dullness of barren politics. This

endeavour has enriched and mellowed his personality and revealed what was truly significant in his genius. I have since learnt to understand him, as I would understand an artist, not by the theories and fantasies of the creed he may profess, but by that expression in his practice which gives evidence to the uniqueness of his mind. In that only true perspective, as I watch him, I am amazed at the effectiveness of his humanity.✓

[An ascetic himself, he does not frown on the joys of others, but works for the enlivening of their existence day and night. He exalts poverty in his own life, but no man in India has striven more assiduously than he for the material welfare of his people. A reformer with the zeal of a revolutionary, he imposes severe restraints on the very passions he provokes. Something of an idolator and also an iconoclast, he leaves the old gods in their dusty niches of sanctity and simply lures the old worship to better and more humane purposes. Professing his adherence to the caste system, he launches his firmest attack against it where it keeps its strongest guards, and yet he has hardly suffered from popular disapprobation as would have been the case with a lesser man who would have much less power to be effective in his efforts.]

He condemns sexual life as inconsistent with the moral progress of man, and has a horror of sex as great as that of the author of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, but, unlike Tolstoy, he betrays no abhorrence of the sex that tempts his kind. In fact, his tenderness for woman is one of the noblest and most consistent traits of his character, and he counts among the women of his country some of his best and truest comrades in the great movement he is leading.

He advises his followers to hate evil without hating the evil-doer. It sounds an impossible precept, but he has made it as true as it can be made in his own life. I had once occasion to be present at an interview he gave to a certain prominent politician who had been denounced by the official Congress party as a deserter. Any other Congress leader

would have assumed a repelling attitude, but Gandhiji was all graciousness and listened to him with patience and sympathy, without once giving him occasion to feel small. Here, I said to myself, is a truly great man, for he is greater than the party he belongs to, greater even than the creed he professes.

This, then, seems to me to be the significant fact about Gandhiji. Great as he is as a politician, as an organizer, as a leader of men, as a moral reformer, he is greater than all these as a man, because none of these aspects and activities limits his humanity. They are rather inspired and sustained by it. Though an incorrigible idealist and given to referring all conduct to certain pet formulæ of his own, he is essentially a lover of men and not of mere ideas ; which makes him so cautious and conservative in his revolutionary schemes. If he proposes an experiment for society, he must first subject himself to its ordeal. If he calls for a sacrifice, he must first pay its price himself. While many Socialists wait for all to be deprived of their privileges before they would part with theirs, this man first renounces before he ventures to make any claims on the renunciation of others.

There are patriots in India, as indeed among all peoples, who have sacrificed for their country as much as Gandhiji has done, and some who have had to suffer much worse penalties than he has ever had to endure: even as in the religious sphere, there are ascetics in this country, compared to the rigours of whose practices Gandhiji's life is one of comparative ease. But these patriots are mere patriots and nothing more ; and these ascetics are mere spiritual athletes, limited as men by their very virtues ; while this man seems greater than his virtues, great as they are.

Perhaps none of the reforms with which his name is associated was originally his in conception. They have almost all been proposed and preached by his predecessors or contemporaries. Long before the Congress adopted them, I

had myself preached and written about the necessity of a constructive programme of rural reconstruction in India ; of handicrafts as an essential element in the education of our children ; of the absolute necessity of ridding Hinduism of the nightmare of untouchability. Nevertheless, it remains true, that they have never had the same energizing power in them as when he took them up ; for now they are quickened by the great life-force of the complete man who is absolutely one with his ideas, whose visions perfectly blend with his whole being.

His emphasis on the truth and purity of the means, from which he has evolved his creed of non-violence, is but another aspect of his deep and insistent humanity ; for it insists that men in their fight for their claims must only so assert their rights, whether as individuals or as groups, as never to violate their fundamental obligation to humanity, which is to respect life. To say that, because existing rights and privileges of certain classes were originally won and are still maintained by violence, they can only be destroyed by violence, is to create an unending circle of viciousness ; for there will always be men with some grievance, fancied or real, against the prevailing order of society, who will claim the same immunity from moral obligation and the right to wade to their goal through slaughter. Somewhere the circle has to be broken, and Gandhiji wants his country to win the glory of first breaking it.

Perhaps he will not succeed. Perhaps he will fail as the Buddha failed and as Christ failed to wean men from their iniquities, but he will always be remembered as one who made his life a lesson for all ages to come.

1938

## HIM WE MAY CALL A VAISHNAVA

### 1

Lo! Him we may call the man of the Lord Omnipresent<sup>1</sup> who experiences in himself the pain that another feels ; who renders service to soothe another's distress ; who does not import into his mental texture pride of ego or of deed.

### 2

Who venerates each one in every world ; who speaks ill of none ; whose speech, whose senses and whose mind are kept under firm discipline—blessed, blessed is the mother who gave birth to him. Him we may call a Vaishnava.

### 3

Whose sight is equivisual ;<sup>2</sup> whose ambitions have been abandoned ; to whom all women not locked with him in marriage are as mother ; whose tongue slips not to utter untruth ; whose hand does not stretch forth to touch what is not his own. Him we may call a Vaishnava.

### 4

He does not fall prey to delusion ; he is not overwhelmed by material lures ; his mind is incapable of attachment to things of this world ; he is engrossed in his love for the name of the blissful<sup>3</sup> Lord ; his person is so cleansed and pure that in it are concentrated all the sanctifying places of pilgrimage of this earth. Him we may call a Vaishnava.

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<sup>1</sup> Vishnu, from Sanskrit *Vish* to enter through and through.

<sup>2</sup> *Samadrishti*.

<sup>3</sup> *Rama* from Sanskrit *Ram* to please, to give bliss.

He cherishes no desires ; he knows no tortuous ways ; he has cast off wishful longings, also resentment and indignation. Says Narsaiyo,<sup>4</sup> seventy-one generations of ancestors pass on to Paradise on one's attaining a glimpse of such a one whom we may call a Vaishnava.

—*Narasimha Mehta*

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<sup>4</sup> Narasimha in its diminutive, humble form.

## UNITY—GANDHIJI'S CONCEPTION

J. B. KRIPALANI

ONE GREAT contribution of Gandhiji towards the progress of humanity is the idea that human life is a unity. It is a synthetic whole. It cannot be divided into air-tight compartments.

The idea is not altogether new. In primitive society too human life was conceived as a unity. But this unity was mechanical, based upon tribal customs, conventions and taboos. The individual never understood the underlying principle or principles, if any, on which these were built. He had to follow in his individual and collective life such rules as were prescribed for him by his hereditary status in the clan. For the chieftain there were one set of conventions and taboos, for the priest and the magician another and a different one for the common man. Nobody questioned the validity of the customary rules handed down from time immemorial. If, however, anybody dared to question he was looked upon with suspicion. He was the corruptor of morals and as such a public enemy who must be eliminated, ostracized or killed. In some tribes, however, the powerful chieftain or the priest and the magician initiated change and movement. If it was in the interest of justice and a higher principle the tribe advanced to the next stage in civilization. Some of the tribes, however, never advanced. They remained fixed and fossilized.

In religious societies the individual's life is conceived as a unity. It is not compartmentalized. All higher forms of religion have one single purpose for the individual. They rarely think of the group-life. When they do, they do so indirectly. They hold that man is a spiritual entity. This world is material. Man's sojourn here is temporary. In this interval he has to fit himself for his permanent abode in heaven amidst gods and angels. Where this semi-material

conception of the life beyond is refined, the end of man is to achieve Emancipation, *Moksha*, Freedom, *Nirvan* or Self-realization. Even as the conception of heaven, so this final state of man is described differently in different religions. All human activity has to be guided and regulated by this conception of the life beyond.

However, every religion is obliged to recognize the variety of the urges of life. These do not always square with the requirements of the life of the spirit. Therefore, in most of the great religions there are two sets of rules and principles laid down, for the elect whose sole concern is the life of the spirit and for the ordinary who busy themselves with the concerns of this mundane world. For the householder the rules prescribed represent a compromise between the requirements of the spirit and the demands of the flesh. Often it is difficult to find any connection between the ideal and the practical, between what ought to be and what is. There is no single principle or a set of allied principles which regulate the life of the citizen and the householder, or again the individual acting as such and as a member of a corporate group. The morality that guides the individuals in some professions is quite different from the one he is expected to practise outside such professions.

Buddhism in its early stages denied the possibility of *Nirvana* to a householder. Only a sannyasin, *Bhikshu*, could achieve *Nirvana*. The sannyasin has therefore to be absolutely non-violent and without possessions. For him there can be no friend or foe. He has no home, no caste, no country. He is a free citizen of the world. He neither spins nor weaves nor cooks nor builds a house for himself. However, all these activities are allowed to the householder. Performing these and other activities of social life he is not expected to act upon the rigour of the fundamental principles on which the ideal morality is based. In Hinduism, the householder, if he belongs to the *Khatriya*, the fighting caste, is allowed to engage in battle for a righteous cause adhering to the rules laid down in this behalf in the

Shastras. The administrator and the merchant have to carry on the duties of their respective stations in life under various restrictions. However, there is little relation between the principles regulating the ideal life of the sannyasin and the practical life of the householder.

In Christianity the New Testament prescribes a life that would suit only a recluse. The commandment not to take human life is absolute . . . 'Resist no evil'; 'Whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek give him the other also'; 'If any man takes away thy coat let him have thy cloak also'. The Commandment of non-possession of worldly goods is also absolute. . . . 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these'. The Commandment about sex-purity (*Brahmacharya*) is almost absolute. Marriage is only a concession to human carnality.

The Catholic Church tried to modify the rigour of this absolute morality. But it did it rather mechanically. For all the complex human situations, the law and the rule were prescribed by the Pope and his Council of Cardinals. The Church interfered in every department of life. It specially interfered in medieval power-politics, concerned as it was with crooked diplomacy and ruthless war. The consequence of this was that the moral authority of the Church suffered. Its claim as an instrument of God, as the voice of Jesus Christ and holding the keys of heaven came to be discredited. Along with this the Renaissance, freeing men's minds from the bounds of tradition and authority, worked towards the same end. There was revolt. At first politics were separated from religion. Afterwards, commerce and industry came to be so separated. But Christian morality was based upon the Bible. Divorced from religion it had to seek other bases. Morals were sought to be drawn from individual and collective search for happiness. In Hedonism, Utilitarianism and Positivism, science became the source of morality. Social sciences completed this process. They

created the economic, the political and the biological man. The economic man was moved only by economic considerations. If not, he was behaving unscientifically which was as good as to say that he was behaving immorally. A great deal of humane legislation to ameliorate the condition of the peasant and the labourer in the 18th century and early part of the 19th was defeated on such 'scientific' grounds. All this led to confusion. Life came to be divided into air-tight compartments and each compartment had its own rules and conventions which were kept or violated as suited the convenience of individuals and groups. At best it was guided by set conventions that had grown up. There were no common principles to which conduct could be referred. There was no unity.

Islam, from the beginning, tried to keep before its followers the idea that human life is a unity. It tried to regulate the whole of life through the commandments given in the Koran. These could not be modified or changed whatever the times or the circumstances. All situations are supposed to have been provided for. In earlier days there was the *Hadis* which could to some extent enlarge on the Koran. It embodied the practice of the Khalifas and their interpretation of the commandments laid down in the Holy Book. This *Hadis* also in course of time became fixed and rigid. Thus the rules laid down became more or less mechanical. The unity of principle is not quite clear. For instance, to select one example only, the principles regulating conduct towards friends and enemies differ. But in life it is difficult to decide who is a friend and who is an enemy. The friend of to-day may be the enemy of tomorrow. Any difference of opinion and outlook may make a friend and a neighbour into an enemy. Principles of morality however cannot change from minute to minute and from person to person.

Gandhiji's synthesis of human life and its unity differs from the primitive conception as also from that established by the great religions of the world. It is not based on the

lower level of taboo, custom and convention nor is it based upon differing principles that have no connection with each other. The unity of Gandhiji's conception is on a higher level. It is based upon certain principles which are intimately correlated and which are fundamental to all social life and are recognized by all the great religions of the world. However, in religion these principles have been so modified in practice that they have lost much of their meaning and the unity that ought to run through them. For instance, under certain circumstances every religion allows the practice of organized violence and the cruelty incident thereto. Organized violence among groups is inseparable from diplomacy and strategem, involving untruth and falsehood and the subordination of means to ends. In economic life the same violence, in the shape of exploitation, prevails and is sanctioned and justified by current moralities and religions. The rules of social and civilized conduct find little place in these activities. What will not be tolerated in the family, among neighbours or in the club is not only tolerated but justified and applauded in the political and economic fields. People engaged in these activities develop a double conscience, one truthful, just and generous, another selfish, cruel and revengeful. One often hears the phrases, 'politics is politics', 'business is business'. It only means that we need not be squeamish about the means employed to succeed in these activities. An individual whose personal and social conduct is regulated by higher standards of morality, if he is engaged to act as a representative of his nation to another country can, with impunity and without injuring his position, spy, cheat and double-cross. It is nearly the same in the economic field. Even in religion doubtful means, violating the principles of truth, love and humanity are used on the principle of ends justifying the means. This is specially so in credal and proselytising religions. Men are sought to be made faithful to the Lord and all means towards that desirable end are

held justified. Men's souls must be saved from eternal fire by any means, if need be against their will.

Gandhiji in his life and teachings discards all double standards of morality. He wants us to eschew all falsehood and violence. He holds that evil means contaminate good and desirable ends. All activity, political, economic or any other must be guided and informed by truth, non-violence and a scrupulous regard for means. Gandhiji lays down no detailed rules of conduct. He merely provides the measure of certain co-ordinated moral principles to which conduct in all departments of life must be referred. Does it square with these principles? To the extent that it does, it is right conduct. For Gandhiji there is no economic, political or biological man. Whatever profession a man follows he must not injure the Lord residing in his heart. If there are professions where one cannot avoid falsehood and violence such professions should be abandoned. War is such an activity. However, war is supposed to right wrongs! Gandhiji has found for humanity a civilized way for righting wrongs and establishing justice which is both non-violent and truthful. This non-violent method, Satyagraha, he holds, is the most effective way of establishing justice, not only among individuals but also among groups. It leaves no after-effect of bad *Karma* which must be paid for sooner or later. It creates ill-will or hatred towards none. In it there are no victors and no vanquished. Often the vanquished is the victor. He vindicates the moral law and even in defeat asserts his moral superiority. For Gandhiji there are no departments of life, whether political or economic, which can afford to dispense with truth and non-violence or a scrupulous regard for the means used. All these three principles are equally important. They are intimately connected. They flow from each other. None can be dispensed with. Acting in conformity with them one avoids a split personality and a double conscience. These principles do not apply merely to individual life but they are valid also in collective and international life. It is on the bases of these principles that

human life can be unified and a new and just social order, free from selfishness, greed, violence and exploitation be built and *Ram-Rajya* established here on earth.

## GANDHI AND GANDHISM

NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

### TRUTH

MY FIRST really intimate acquaintance with Gandhiji was formed in 1945 when he came to Calcutta on the eve of his tour through Bengal, Assam and Madras. A few weeks earlier, a friend of mine had written from Wardha that I was to see Gandhiji next time when he came to Bengal. In fact that was the wish which the latter had himself expressed. The opportunity came at Sodepur on the 4th of November 1945. It was then afternoon, and not the regular hour for interviews. Gandhiji was at his meals, which he invariably finished before starting for the prayer meeting, and I therefore felt rather embarrassed in his presence. Perhaps he sensed my uneasiness and started by setting me at ease.

Then he told me why he had desired to speak to me. He said that I not only made a collection of his writings but also tried to interpret them. For this, it was not enough that I should be acquainted with his writings, but it was more necessary that I should see him at work. During the conversation, he made it clear that his speeches and writings contained a picture of not what he actually was, but what he wanted to be: it was a record of ideals and aspirations, but not of their realization. In order to understand an ideal, it was not enough to form a clear idea about its nature, but also to observe how far one's conduct could be transformed by its pursuit.

Gandhiji then went on to say that anyone who really wanted to understand him should moreover observe carefully the organizations which he had helped to build up or modify, and through which he tried to work in company with others. It was only by an impartial examination of

the working of these institutions, both while they were functioning under his direct guidance as well as when he was away, that one could discover how far a collective practice of non-violence was really possible in actual life.

What struck me most during that interview was the detachment with which he spoke about his own life, his aspirations and achievements, and that with someone of whom he knew almost nothing. It was indeed the same truly scientific and impersonal spirit which I had witnessed elsewhere, in the laboratory, but which was of such rare occurrence in our emotion-ridden, storm-tossed private or public life. It also dawned upon me that what Gandhiji meant by Truth was not anything static but something which was constantly open to examination and revision; something which was definitely known to be of a limited nature but was capable of expansion and growth. This personal contact with Gandhiji gave me the courage to follow what I considered to be my duty even when it might hurt the feelings of those whom I held in great respect.

An occasion arose on the 20th of November 1946, at Kazirkhil Camp in Noakhali. All of Gandhiji's tried workers, like Sri Pyarelal or Sri Satis Chandra Das Gupta, had been assigned special duties. Whoever had any knowledge of village life or experience in constructive work had been posted in one or other of the riot-torn villages of Noakhali; and none of the old associates were, in consequence, available for looking after Gandhiji's personal needs when he decided to move from village to village on a lonely pilgrimage. By a fortunate accident, the call came to me; but what I felt was that Gandhiji had made up his mind to put up with as much inconvenience as possible, if only he could thereby release his trained and tried associates for more important work elsewhere.

When I was to decide finally if the proposal was agreeable to me or not, I frankly placed before Gandhiji my personal difficulties. There could be no question so far as serving him personally was concerned; to me it was indeed a

privilege. But a more serious consideration made me hesitate. Prayer formed an integral part of Gandhiji's life, and I had never prayed in life. The question whether God existed or not never seriously occupied my mind, and so I felt it was my duty to place everything clearly before him before the final choice was made. Gandhiji listened calmly to what I had to say, cross-examined me, and finally said that others of the same kind of belief had lived with him before, and there was no bar that way.

These two experiences have been among the most precious ones in my life, primarily because I then realized what Gandhiji meant by the term truth, and also because I understood the more important fact that different people, each holding a limited view of truth, could work in perfect harmony if only they had the same respect for the 'truth' of others as they had for their own.

One of Gandhiji's greatest contributions to India has been this insistence upon the philosophical foundation of democracy. We have enough of democratic forms in our country, not built up by our own labours but superimposed by well-meaning people from outside; but the essential spirit is often lacking in them. Long ago, we had a pattern of public organization based on democratic principles, to regulate village-life or the life of the different caste or trade guilds; but they have long since disappeared as those hereditary occupations fell into decay as a result of the impact of capitalistic industrialism, and as the authority of the village communes or caste-guilds was replaced by that of a highly organized state in many respects. The new forms of democracy which were set up by our erstwhile rulers were neither suited to the experiences of India, nor were they free enough from official interference to help us in developing initiative and responsibility through trial and error. Yet to-day, we do need certain democratic institutions, after the fashion of the West, in order to carry on our work in the modern world; and we have therefore also to build up the necessary mental attitude which will help us

in that growth. And, as we have said, Gandhiji applied himself to this task in India by teaching us to respect the beliefs and cultures of others, teaching us to respect and foster real freedom of thought.

### TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE

From Truth, the object, to Non-violence as the means of attaining that object, was a perfectly logical and natural step for Gandhiji. Because no two persons will ever see truth alike, therefore, he argued, one could not take recourse to violence for the propagation of one's particular version of truth. The only decent way is, to live in the light of one's truth, in so far as has been attained at the moment, and suffer in consequence of that belief where suffering is actually called for. Suffering for the sake of truth, chastens ; it puts our sincerity to test, it helps to set us on the right track when we are mistaken. But if one takes recourse to violence, one does not know where one stands. For the pride which leads us to imagine that we are in possession of the whole truth and have therefore the right to punish others for their more limited view of truth, may blind us to such an extent as to keep us tied to the rut which has caught our wheels. The feeling of certainty goes ill with the spirit of science. Humility and the determination to eschew violence, and take to the methods of labour and of self-suffering for the propagation of one's limited view of truth, are therefore the logical corollaries of Gandhiji's fundamentally scientific and democratic attitude. Self-suffering, he used to say, is the law of man as violence is the law of the brute. Civilization, he held, consists in the substitution of intolerance and violence by methods of toleration and persuasion wherever conflicts occur in human relations. The ideal can surely not be reached in a day ; but our ingenuity should be exercised in devising new methods of settlement through non-violence, i.e. in extending the scope of democracy to all branches of private and public life.

## GANDHIJI'S LIFE

Gandhiji was an expert in the application of constitutional remedies. But when they failed, as they often did, he did not hesitate to take recourse to direct action. Effort along constitutional channels was, according to him, a necessary preparatory stage through which the Satyagrahi had to pass in every campaign before plunging into direct action. But even with regard to non-co-operation, his opinion was that, if it was non-violent, i.e. if the non-co-operator limited the suffering to his own side and did not have the intention of punishing his adversary but of converting him, then such non-co-operation certainly lay within the constitutional rights of the citizen. Satyagraha was, for him, a completely moral substitute for war. While speaking with reference to English Pacifism, he once said:

I know there are some great and sincere men amongst them, but they are thinking in terms of pacifism as distinguished from unadulterated non-violence. I am essentially a non-violent man, and I believe in war bereft of every trace of violence. An essentially non-violent man does not calculate the consequences. The English pacifists you are talking of calculate, and when they speak of pacifism, they do so with the mental reservation that when pacifism fails, arms might be used. With them not non-violence but arms are the ultimate sanction, as was the case with Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. No, someone has to arise in England with the living faith to say that England, whatever happens, shall not use arms. They are a nation fully armed, and if they having the power deliberately refuse to use arms, theirs will be the first example of Christianity in active practice on a mass scale. That will be a real miracle.—*Harijan*, 14-5-38, 114.

All his life, Gandhiji devised and experimented with solution after solution for the many evils which beset our

national life through ways other than the usual violent ones. In the family, within the small sphere of his Asram life in South Africa and in India, Gandhiji tried to test and improve the technique of non-violent action until he gained confidence enough to apply it in the larger sphere of public life and in connection with problems where the method of persuasion through heroic self-suffering had never been applied before. Problems of distrust and conflict between Hindus and Mussalmans, between the various Hindu castes, between the English rulers and Indians, between Boers and Asiatics, between farmers and indigo-planters, between capitalists and mill-hands, between the Princes of the States and their subjects, were all handled at one time or other by Gandhiji in his personal capacity, as well as in his capacity as representative of the Indian National Congress. In many cases, he was successful, in others he was not. For such failures, he never blamed the technique but blamed himself as the imperfect instrument through which non-violence had operated. It was Gandhiji's ceaseless endeavour to perfect the instrument of non-violence so that, not he alone, but others also after him, might use it with success.

Many questioned him during his lifetime, why he retained association with the Congress even when it had repeatedly failed to live up to his expectations. His answer was that his association with the Congress helped the latter to pursue the technique corporate non-violent action. He never expected men to be perfect first before treading the new path of non-violence, but he held that Satyagraha itself was an educative process through which the individual progressed towards perfection. In 1942, he wrote:

I adhere to the opinion that I did well to present to the Congress non-violence as an expedient. I could not have done otherwise, if I was to introduce it into politics. In South Africa too I introduced it as an expedient. It was successful there because resisters were a small number in a compact area and therefore

easily controlled. Here we had numberless persons scattered over a huge country. The result was that they could not be easily controlled or trained. And yet it is a marvel the way they have responded. They might have responded much better and shown far better results. But I have no sense of disappointment in me over the results obtained. If I had started with men who accepted non-violence as a creed, I might have ended with myself. Imperfect as I am, I started with imperfect men and women and sailed on an uncharted ocean. Thank God, that though the boat has not reached its haven, it has proved fairly stormproof. —*Harijan*, 12-4-42, 116.

#### FOLLOWING GANDHIJI

Now that Gandhiji is no longer with us, it is necessary that we should try to follow the path in which he led as a pioneer ; provided, of course, we believe it is a path worth pursuing. Those who have gained the belief that it is only through non-violence that democracy can be established in the world, have a double responsibility. We may not blindly do just what Gandhiji asked us to do in his lifetime, if only for the simple reason that he varied his instructions according to prevailing circumstances. If we are to be worthy of his best heritage, we must be brave enough to tread the difficult path of truth, as he would have wished us to follow. Even with regard to Satyagraha, he once wrote :

I have never claimed to present the complete science of non-violence. It does not lend itself to such treatment. So far as I know, no single science does, not even the very exact science of mathematics. I am but a seeker, and I have fellow-seekers like the questioner whom I invite to accompany me in the very difficult but equally fascinating search.—*Harijan*, 22-2-42, 84.

I have no set theory to go by. I have not worked

out the science of Satyagraha in its entirety. You can join me in my quest if it appeals to you and you feel the call.—*Harijan*, 27-5-39, 136.

In India, there have been numerous big and small movements in course of the last thirty years, and many of them were guided by non-violent ideals. But often violence crept in, either in action or in intention, and thus vitiated the results which might otherwise have been obtained. Some positive results were achieved in course of those movements, although they were not always up to expectation. But unfortunately hardly any of them has been studied with the scientific care which is due to new social experiments. The basic facts of only a few, like those of Kaira, Champaran, Bardoli or Travancore, are available; while, for the rest, there is not even available any detailed factual account. In violent warfare, the General Staff of an army subjects every campaign to detailed examination. They are studied with care for future use. If a battle reveals points of weakness, whether in arms or in organization, in strategy or in tactics, the General Staff immediately advises a reform somewhere so that the army may grow from strength to strength.

Non-violence in collective action, and worked through democratic organizations, is not only a new experience for India but also for the whole world. Gandhiji had chosen India as his most suitable laboratory for experiment. He had faith in India of the masses. But once perhaps he had a faint feeling that the more active masses of the West might take to it more readily than the inert masses of our country. More than twenty years ago, he wrote:

If the masses of Europe can be persuaded to adopt the view I have suggested, it will be found that violence will be wholly unnecessary to attain the aim and they can easily come to their own by following the obvious corollaries of non-violence. It may even be that what seems to me to be so natural and feasible in India, may take longer to permeate the inert Indian masses than

the active European masses.—*Young India*, 3-9-25, 304.

If, however, we are to prove worthy of the trust which Gandhiji reposed in us, we may not, as we have said, follow blindly in his footsteps. That would mean the undoing of the very core of his life and teachings in the shape of Truth. What we may do, to start with, is to examine the course of every single non-violent movement through which we have passed, as well as examine the various democratic institutions through which we tried to build up the necessary habits of activity, discipline and co-operation during times of peace. We must find out how far non-violence succeeded, how violence and forces counter to democracy stepped in, how the enthusiasm of the leaders as well as of the masses waxed and waned, and why they did so, and finally what were the positive results of these experiments in the removal of specific social, economic or political disabilities, as well as in the matter of transforming the relation between the combatants. After having taken stock of everything, we have to set about our task of improving the instruments so that more of non-violence and of democracy might be introduced into our social life. We may have to recast the form of our institutions; we may have to impart a feeling of struggle where steady, peaceful routine fails to evoke the necessary enthusiasm among men; it may be necessary to recast our mental attitude towards our adversary, as well as those of our co-workers who may not see eye to eye with us. In short, it is only if we are keen upon learning from experience, and have also the courage and diligence to reform ourselves where necessary, that we can hope to carry on the work which Gandhiji has left unfulfilled for us.

We must remember that just as Truth was Gandhiji's right hand, so was Non-violence his left. One of the chief beauties of his life was the capacity to work in company with those who materially differed from him, if only there was some common task where their co-operation could be

enlisted. It is always the intention and the aim of the Satyagrahi to awaken the best in his adversary by means of non-violent resistance, so that ultimately both of them can work together in the formation of the new life. If that is so with regard to one's adversary, how much more so should it be with those who share many things with us in common? For Gandhiji, this aim of conversion of the opponent in order to gain his co-operation, was the central purpose of Satyagraha.

It is only by keeping alive the torches of Truth and Non-violence that we can serve the cause for which Gandhiji battled all his life. If to-day, under our peculiar circumstances, we find it hard to tread that difficult path, we at least owe a duty to the people of other lands. We must recover and preserve for future generations the scientific results of the various campaigns that have taken place in India, and unless we do this quickly, many of the necessary details may be lost for ever. We have to collect them, record them with precision, study them scientifically, for our own sake as well as for the sake of others in the world.

## GANDHIAN SYMBOLS

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

GANDHIJI did not himself use symbols to indicate his teachings, but certain things associated with him represent what he stood for. It is with these that we shall here deal.

**SPINNING WHEEL:** The most outstanding and the most popular of all the symbols associated with Gandhiji is undoubtedly the spinning wheel. Gandhiji has attributed to the wheel many virtues. It is for him the fulfiller of every desire economic, political, social, educational, moral and cultural. As against this, most educated Indians have looked upon the spinning wheel with suspicion. They have thought that to advocate it at a time when the rest of the world was taking to the latest labour-saving machinery was to set back the pace of material advancement in India, and to condemn her to perpetual poverty and political subjection. What then made Gandhiji plead unceasingly on behalf of the spinning wheel?

Gandhiji was overwhelmed by the dire poverty he found all around him. There were many causes for this poverty. The chief was the policy of the British rulers who upset the balance between agriculture and industry in the villages, reduced India into being a purely raw material producing country, and in the interests of British manufacture stifled her industrial growth. The result was that people who formerly carried on industrial pursuits in the villages were left idle. The population also steadily increased from year to year. Normally it should not have been difficult to absorb this increase. But, as it happened, with little or no chance of industrial employment, more and more people were left without any gainful occupation. What was the remedy, especially when the alien Government was apathetic, if not actually hostile, to the industrial development of the country? Was it not to tell the people in the villages,

and India lives in the villages, to manufacture whatever they could for themselves without looking for any outside help, with the resources locally available to them?

As symbolic of all such industries which may be carried on by the people through their own effort, Gandhiji fixed on hand-spinning which was well-nigh universal in our country till the arrival of the British in our midst. It is an industry which requires little or no capital, very inexpensive tools, and hardly any training to acquire the necessary skill. The raw material for it, viz. cotton, is locally available, and can be grown by the villager himself. If to-day the villager goes about half-clad, it is because he is too poor to buy cloth. To him Gandhiji says, 'Spin during your idle moments and produce cloth for your own requirements'. Of course if he can occupy himself more profitably doing something else, well and good. If not, he should at least spin. The remarkable suitability of this industry for universal adoption is that it is within the means and ability of young and old, and men and women; the raw material needed for it is to be found throughout the country, and it meets a universal need, so that there is no trouble about marketing the finished product.

If Gandhiji himself took to hand-spinning and appealed to the rich and the educated also to spin, it is not for the material compensation it will bring, but because one could not very well tell others to spin when one did not oneself show the way by practising what one preached. Besides, Gandhiji believed in the dignity and the necessity of manual labour for all; moreover, handspinning, he held, provided a means whereby a bond could be established between the rich and the poor, the high and the low.

But spinning was only symbolic. It meant that everywhere people should take up whatever industry was within their reach, and produce wealth instead of looking helplessly to others for aid.

Besides this economic objective, Gandhiji had undoubtedly a political motive behind his movement for hand-spin-

ning, but not in the sense in which it is usually understood. People sometimes imagine that Gandhiji started hand-spinning in order to boycott British cloth and thus force Britain to grant independence to India. But this is contrary to Gandhiji's conception of non-violence. There is no doubt that at the back of his mind was the idea that organizing the people for spinning and weaving their own cloth would remove the temptation for Britain to continue what he described as 'immoral' trade in British cloth in India, and this he believed would mark the beginning of the end of other forms of exploitation practised by British in India.

Further, he was convinced that when people took to depending on themselves for a solution of their own problems, organized themselves for it, and conducted the work, as they would have to, cooperatively, they would become self-reliant and disciplined, and would learn self-help. Such a strong, independent and organized people cannot for long be kept under political subjection. So the spinning wheel, Gandhiji believed, would in the natural course lead to *swaraj* or self-government. He attached more importance to such psychological and spiritual effects of hand-spinning and other cottage industries than to the economic amelioration they would bring.

Nor were such village and cottage industries to be taken up only as a temporary measure to alleviate poverty. He regarded them as occupying a central and permanent place in any economic order he would set up for our country. He disliked the modern tendency towards centralization, for thereby the individual loses his initiative and becomes part of a huge organization over which he has hardly any control. Gandhiji, with his intense love of freedom and initiative for the worker, would have primarily a decentralized economy, where production is in the hands of individuals scattered all over the country, as it is in village and cottage industries. Large-scale machinery and the consequent centralization of power has under capitalism led to exploitation of the worker. Even if capitalism were abolished and the

State took over charge of industries, the worker would still remain at the mercy of those in power. Gandhiji would not have him placed thus in a position of helplessness. He would have the worker be resourceful, strong and self-dependent. This he can be only if he is as far as possible in charge of production as he is in small-scale manufacture in cottages.

Another reason for Gandhiji preferring cottage industries like hand-spinning and weaving to mills and factories is that factory-production curtails labour. For our huge population the problem is to find work. So it is necessary that we adopt such methods as will distribute work widely. To every person whom a modern mill can employ, a hand-loom can employ 25 persons. Therefore, we should resort to hand-loom in preference to cloth-mills, to cottage production rather than to factory-manufacture.

Besides, factory-production is mechanical and reduces work to drudgery, to a dead monotonous routine. In cottage-production, on the other hand, work is many-sided, and calls out the intelligence, character and artistic sense of the worker. It thus develops his capacities while factory-production stifles them, as the machine is made in such a way as to work automatically with precision and accuracy, leaving no scope for the worker to exercise his talents in relation to his work. Factory-work thus ceases to be educative. As against this, Gandhiji holds that education or the development of the individual is vitally important. When it is imparted as a thing in itself it becomes bookish and academic, and unrelated to life. If our people are to develop in mind, body and character, work must be of a kind that will give the fullest scope for the exercise of the individual's powers. Hence again, Gandhiji prefers cottage industries and hand-crafts to mill industries and machine manufacture.

Above all, the supreme reason for Gandhiji advocating the spinning wheel, or an economy based on cottage industries, is that it is the best way of averting violence. We

have already seen that so far as the worker goes, where there is centralization he becomes powerless and is liable to be exploited, whether by the capitalist or by a totalitarian State. On the other hand, in a decentralized economy the worker is by comparison his own master. Therefore in such an economy the chances for exploitation of the worker, and therefore for violence, are considerably minimised.

Similarly as between nations, a decentralized economy based on cottage industries is the surest way of establishing peace and putting an end to violence in the form of imperialism and war. We know to our cost that highly industrialized nations seek to control colonial countries in order to obtain raw materials from them and to dump finished goods on them. Large-scale production is impossible without a steady supply of raw materials on the one hand, and sure markets on the other. Hence industrialized countries seek to build up empires and hold weaker nations in subjection ; and as no nation voluntarily submits to domination by another the process is effected by force and violence. Nor is this all. As nations advance in industrialization they look upon each other with envy. Each covets for himself the possessions of the other, or wishes to strengthen itself by bringing under its sphere of influence whatever colonial country it can. This at once provokes war, each bloodier and more destructive than the one previous, and threatens mankind with complete annihilation. If this is what centralized production has led us to, is it not far better to turn away from large-scale manufacture? Gandhiji therefore recommends a decentralized economy, where self-sufficient village units will produce to meet their own primary requirements and consume as far as possible only what they themselves produce. When each such unit produces just sufficient for its own needs, and not more, there will be no incentive for imperialism and war. Pacifists all the world over have been clamouring for peace, without troubling thus to isolate and to root out the cause of war. Gandhiji's contribution lies in his clear percep-

tion that the cause of war is primarily economic, viz. large-scale production irrespective of markets. He was convinced that the only way to end war was to end such production and to substitute it by cottage production wherever possible. The decentralized economy, symbolized by the spinning wheel is then Gandhiji's original solution to the problem of war.

Cow: Another cause for which Gandhiji strove was that of the cow. The cow, it must be remembered, stands for all lower creation. Gandhiji would not have non-violence or love limited only to human beings. In accordance with Hinduism he believed that our love should reach out to embrace all living creatures.

It was fitting in an agricultural country like ours, the cow was chosen by our ancestors as the object of devotion to represent all lower creation, for its life is the closest entwined with ours. It is the mother of bullocks which provided the motive power in villages for agriculture, irrigation, industries and transport ; and through its milk and milk products, so essential especially for those of our people who are vegetarians, it sustains us in health and vigour. Gandhiji would therefore have us treat the cow with love as our mother.

In this respect, as already said, he was only reviving one of the great teachings of Hinduism through the ages. Our people had departed from the spirit of this teaching and observed only the outward form. They worshipped the cow with due ceremony, but inflicted the most terrible cruelties on the animal, neglected and starved it, or sold it to be slaughtered. In spite of cow-worship and the work of cow-protection societies the Indian cow is the most miserable of her species throughout the world.

One may think, however, that it is not necessary to-day to attach so much importance to the cow as our ancestors did, for in this age of machinery cattle will not be required to provide motive power in villages. Thus, for example, in the place of cattle we may have tractors for ploughing. But

in reply we may ask which villager can afford a tractor and other modern agricultural machinery which necessarily go with it? If it is replied that villagers can pool their financial resources and buy modern agricultural machinery co-operatively, then the difficulty is that as to-day the cooperative movement is not run by the villagers themselves, the people have neither the capacity nor the experience for it. Besides they would have to cooperate not only in regard to the needed capital, but also in order to pool their land resources together, for their land is at present in tiny fragments which are far too small for a tractor. Modern agricultural machinery are useful where there are hundreds of acres to be cultivated at a stretch. The Indian peasant has very often less than two acres of land in his ownership or control. To pool all these fragments together and to work them cooperatively is beyond his powers to-day.

Even later, it may not be wise for him to adopt tractors and mechanical devices in agriculture. They are useful in countries which have a small population and vast areas to be cultivated. The situation in India is just the reverse. We have a vast population and only small bits of land for an individual to work on. If we adopt machines to replace human beings in agriculture, how shall our people be employed? As it is, because of large-scale industries, whether in India or abroad, our people, as already pointed out, are ever more increasingly thrown out of employment, or are driven to agriculture for a livelihood. But if agriculture also is mechanized their economic condition will become even more desparate. The good that can be expected from mechanization is after all not that machinery will make the land yield more, but only that it will save labour. But the problem in our country, as already said, is not to save labour, but to provide work for our millions.

Besides, mechanization involves fuel, of which we have only a limited supply in our country.

Further, it is said that artificial manures, like chemicals, which we shall have to resort to, if in the place of

bullocks we took to tractors and other machinery, are definitely injurious to the soil. They stimulate the soil and make it produce much for the time being, but only to leave it in the end exhausted and impoverished. They are also said to cause disease in crops and in animals. This is the experience of Sir Albert Howard, formerly Imperial Economic Botanist to the Government of India. He is definitely of the opinion, elaborated in his book called *An Agricultural Testament*, that the only manure which can permanently enrich the soil and help healthy growth in plants and animals is organic, i.e. cattle dung and urine, human excreta, and waste vegetable matter. If this is so, then cattle will be required in agriculture, not only for labour but also for the valuable manure they provide.

Moreover, unlike machines cattle yield not only milk and manure, but also useful materials like hide, bone, hair, fat, blood and flesh when they die. In fact every part of their dead bodies can be made use of. So in the end, they are much more useful to us than machines.

For these reasons, then, it would seem best for us not to be allured into following the way of mechanized agriculture, but to fall back on the bullock for motive power. If we do so, the cow which provides the bullock must still occupy a central place in our national economy.

In this respect Gandhiji regarded the cow as superior to the buffalo, for its bullocks work hard and serve the villager well, while the he-buffalo is comparatively useless for work in the fields. So Gandhiji urged that for milk we should depend on the cow rather than on the buffalo, for then we shall obtain both our milk and our bullocks from the same source. Otherwise, there is violence, for if we depend on the buffalo for milk, the he-buffalo being unfit for work is slaughtered. Likewise, as the cow is then wanted only for the sake of its bullocks, it is sent off to the slaughter-house no sooner than it has calved and the calf has been weaned, for it is too expensive to feed the cow till its next calving. Thus when we depend on the buffalo for milk, we are in-

volved in the slaughter of both the buffalo and the cow. This can be avoided, Gandhiji tells us, if we maintain only the cow and obtain both our milk and our bullocks from it. To do this will also be cheaper from the national viewpoint, for we shall then have to maintain only one animal for both the purposes instead of two as at present.

Further, the bullock which we want from the cow will be stronger and of a better quality, for the cow will be better looked after and fed when we depend on it for milk.

Other reasons which may be given in favour of the cow for supply of milk as over against the buffalo are (a) that cow's milk is more conducive to health than buffalo's as it has more vitamin B, and has in addition vitamin E which is absent in buffalo milk, (b) that the carotene vitamin A value of cow's ghee is ten times as high as that of buffalo ghee, (c) that the cow is less liable to disease than the buffalo, (d) that it matures a year earlier, (e) that its dry period, *i.e.*, the time from when it ceases to give milk to the time it calves again, is three times shorter than that of the buffalo, (f) that its milk yield is not affected adversely by heat and cold as the buffalo's, and (g) that the cow does not require as much grazing ground, feeding and water as the buffalo.

Gandhiji was of the opinion that the whole question of improving the breed of cows should be taken up scientifically. The aim should be not only to produce a cow which will give plenty of milk but also one which can stand our climate and which can produce sturdy bullocks. Even with all its deterioration the Indian cow is through centuries of careful breeding in many respects superior to its Western counterpart. The fat content of the milk of the Indian cow, for example, is rarely less than 4.5 per cent., while British cows yield milk of only 3.5 per cent. fat content. Besides, the Indian cow can live on the meagre fodder locally available, can resist disease, and withstand the tropical heat better than the British cow. It is not wise therefore to cross our cows with foreign breeds indiscriminately.

As a matter of fact, such a procedure has already proved disastrous, for the mixed breeds are not able to stand the poor feeding and the climate, nor are they able to provide us with bullocks capable of doing hard work.

It is calculated that through its milk, bullocks, manure, hide, and bone, the contribution of the cow to the wealth of India (including Pakistan) is over Rs. 1,000 crores annually, an amount which no other industry in India except agriculture can equal. Gandhiji therefore placed high value on every effort to improve the cow, and pleaded with our people to restore it to the central place it once held in village economy as the giver of milk and the mother of the bullocks. Loving care of the cow and devotion to it will, Gandhiji held, richly repay our village folk. Nay more, it will teach them love of all dumb creation, and thus help them to realize their unity with all life.

GOAT: So far as Gandhiji himself went, it is well-known that he gave up taking cow's milk, and took in its place the milk of the goat. The reason for this is that his love for the cow would not allow him to exploit it for his own purposes. He realized, of course, that living necessarily involves violence and exploitation practised by man on the lower forms of life. But he wished to reduce such violence and exploitation, especially so far as he himself went, to the minimum. Hence his vow not to take cow's milk. Later, however, when in South Africa his life was in danger through illness, and doctors insisted on his having milk, his wife struck a compromise and induced him to take goat's milk instead. This he did and continued to do till his death. The goat is called the poor man's cow, as it costs little, breeds often and prolifically, and lives on wild leaves, thus costing practically nothing for its upkeep. As Gandhiji identified himself with the poor, it was fitting that like the poor he depended on the goat for his milk.

LOIN CLOTH: Another feature of Gandhiji that is symbolic of his attitude to life is his dress. It was always

spotless white and it was the minimum consistent with decency and the climate.

He always used white cloth himself and enjoined it on others, because he regarded white as 'honest', as it did not conceal dirt. He stood for meticulous cleanliness in himself, his clothes and his surroundings. So what he wore was an example of the cleanliness he taught and demanded.

He wore the minimum as in view of the poverty all around him he did not feel justified in using more cloth on himself than was absolutely necessary.

Besides, he was convinced that civilization in the real sense of the term does not consist in self-indulgence but in self-restraint. He was opposed to the modern craze for multiplying wants, and believed in the spiritual value of deliberate and voluntary curtailment of one's needs. This he held is what in the end promotes real happiness and increases one's capacity for service. Of course, a certain amount of physical harmony and comfort is necessary even for man's spiritual advancement. So he would not descend to the discomforts and squalor of the average villager. Nevertheless he was of the view that an indefinite increase in one's requirements was a delusion and a snare, and led to nothing but spiritual degeneration and voluptuousness. His loin cloth was thus an expression of his philosophy of renunciation.

Moreover, he held that to possess more than one needed was definitely wrong, as under present conditions it was impossible for one to possess much without depriving one's neighbour of his due share. Non-violence involves taking as little as possible for oneself when the wealth available for others is limited. He believed that taking more than was necessary for one's needs was theft. His loin cloth therefore symbolised his non-violence in dress.

**WATCH:** An article which was inseparable from Gandhiji was his watch, which always hung from his waist. It symbolized his carefully regulated life. Every activity of his had its time which he never missed if he could help it—

his waking, his prayers, walk, massage, bath, food, newspaper reading, correspondence, interviews, spinning, medical care of patients, sleep and what not. He was remarkably punctual, apologized and explained at length if ever he was prevented from coming to his engagement in time, and chided others if they were late by a few minutes. He went through his daily routine at the usual time as far as possible even in his travels and on long train journeys. This close adherence to his watch is symbolic of the strict self-discipline he incessantly preached and practised.

STICK: Another article closely associated with Gandhiji is the long bamboo stick which he carried. Several things are symbolised by it. One is his regular morning and evening walks. Unlike most educated people in India, Gandhiji believed in exercise to keep the body in health. He realized that if health were neglected, one's work suffered, so he took time and pains to nurture the body through careful diet, massage, bath and exercise. He was of the opinion that a man was himself to blame if he fell ill, for it meant that he did not pay due heed to the laws of nature and of health. He believed that if a person studied his constitution, regulated his diet, took plenty of fresh air and exercise, and practised mental detachment so that he was free from worry, he need never fall ill or resort to drugs and medicines. Gandhiji himself was able through these means to keep remarkably fit physically. He learnt to control his blood pressure, so that in spite of the great tension at which he always lived and worked, he was free from attacks of high blood pressure to which he was prone. He always looked fresh, full of life and good cheer, and put many a young man to shame by the speed at which he walked, and the amount of physical and mental work he was able to do.

His walking stick symbolises also his go-aheadness. He was ever on the march, moving onward and forward, not content with the *status quo*, but stepping eagerly towards what might be, prepared to fight single-handed if thwarted

from his set goal. Moreover, life for him was a series of experiments with Truth. His was the unchartered way of the pioneer, rugged and hazardous, which could not be trod without due preparation and support. The stick reveals him as the true path-finder that he was.

Still another significance attaches to the stick. It was not the fashionable walking stick of city-people, but the plain long bamboo rod carried by villagers. It was the insignia of a peasant, and Gandhiji always regarded himself as a farmer. It will be remembered that in the early days of Civil Disobedience when the trying magistrate asked him what his occupation was, he replied that he was a farmer. This was not said for mere effect or as a joke. For Gandhiji soon gave up his work as a barrister and started the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, where he sought to establish a colony of people who were prepared to practise his ideal of bread-labour and simplicity of life. Ever since, he lived and worked as a villager for the villagers. He identified himself with them. He thought as they thought. Their problems were his problems; their cause his cause. The loin-cloth and the stick were typical of village folk, and when adopted by him because of his heart-identity with them, made him one with them also outwardly.

The over-all picture which these Gandhian symbols present is of one completely self-disciplined, who lived and worked for the poor and the down-trodden, and was devoted to the highest ethical principles. Idealist therefore Gandhiji certainly was, but his genius lay not so much in his idealism as in his fundamental grasp of the realities of a situation, and in his applying the ideal immediately to transform the environment. He was essentially a man of action, who took his ideals seriously and put them into practice irrespective of consequences. He was therefore necessarily a rebel and a revolutionary, but a constructive revolutionary who was interested in building rather than in destroying. His uniqueness lay in the fact that all his action, whether revolutionary or constructive, was based on non-violence, so

much so that later generations may well regard his entire life and work as itself a symbol of non-violence.

## WHAT THE WEST OWES TO GANDHI

E. L. ALLEN

ALREADY in his lifetime Gandhi had passed beyond the frontiers of his native India and become a world-possession, and his death has made him unquestionably such. The sources of his inspiration were in the West as well as in the East, in Ruskin's *Unto This Last* as in the *Bhagavad Gita*. True, it was always easier for the Frenchman or the German, or even for the American, to appreciate him than for the Englishman, since we could never quite forget that he was politically an opponent. Nevertheless, when he came among us, he found a ready welcome, not only in the East End of the metropolis, but even in the Lancashire cotton-towns, whose trade might seem to have been threatened by his economic policy. Now that he has gone, we can pay homage to him as to a spirit as great as he was humble; it is an honour to have belonged to the generation out of which he sprang. And deeply as his own people are indebted to him for what he achieved on their behalf, we of the West can recognize in him a teacher whose place is among the greatest. But what exactly is it that we have learned from him?

1. In an age dominated by organization and the mass-mind he has renewed our faith in the powers of the individual. It was no doubt as compensation for what it suffered under the mechanization and depersonalization of life that the West in our time turned in adulation and almost worship to the strong, masterful individual. Men like Mussolini and Hitler showed what could be accomplished by one who despised his fellows and used them only as means to his own ends. They exalted themselves by debasing all others. They spoke of 'personality', but they destroyed it in those they ruled and caricatured it in themselves. What they did show was that the individual is not as help-

less as we imagined, that he is not the mere product of economic and political forces, that he has it in his power to grasp and refashion the scheme of things.

It was the merit of Gandhi that, while revealing to us the potentialities of the single human being even in an age of organization and machinery and the masses, he put these powers to the highest uses. In him we saw what can be accomplished, not by the self-assertive will, but by the will wholly dedicated to God and the good of men. He possessed the only valid kind of authority, not that which depresses others that it may rise, but that which lifts others to its own level. The peasant, the factory-worker, and the Pariah found themselves ennobled even by hearing him speak. Under his influence they ceased to be harassed victims of this ancient or that modern system and became instead erect, free personalities, children of God. He had the rare capacity to make of others what he was himself, an independent and creative centre of spiritual life. So doing, he gave us new faith in man as the bearer of the Inner Light and heartened us in our turn to attempt the task of living in freedom and confidence in God's will for us.

2. Then, in an age which has amassed the means of destruction as no previous one had done and which seems sometimes intoxicated and sometimes perplexed by the powers which it wields, he brought back to us faith in the forces of the spirit. Again, the West had glimpsed this truth but had abused it sadly in so doing. We had learned that power resides not merely in armaments and wealth, but in ideas as well. But ideas were employed by the dictators as a means of establishing themselves more surely; truth became a mere instrument for party or national ends, and a lie might be even more serviceable and therefore more readily used. Education became propaganda and as such a devil's weapon.

To these evils Gandhi opposed his passion for truth, for truth without qualification or subterfuge. An English woman who stayed at one time in his ashram told me how,

when she left determined to urge India's case on her return to this country, he checked her enthusiasm. He insisted that she must obtain an interview with one of the leading officials in the Government of India, tell him everything she proposed to say in England in criticism of it, and give him the opportunity to state its case in reply. Only by utter truth could India be served, he said.

It was this reliance on spiritual forces even in the contest with Great Britain which marks him off from all the other political leaders of his time. He struggled with an empire and prevailed, because he disdained to use the weapons which would have made the conflict a dishonourable one. He showed us what has been so well called 'the power which lies in the renunciation of power'; the fact that he sought nothing for himself gave him the allegiance of his people and commanded the respect and admiration even of those whom he opposed. Thanks to him, we have learned again that history is not made only by the calculable and dominating forces, that there is a power which goes forth from the spirit which can do more than these.

3. Gandhi's method of non-violence and *satyagraha* will naturally seem to the Indian to be rooted in the tradition of *ahimsa*. To us of the West it is reminiscent of the Cross. The Cross has been for centuries our highest symbol, but veneration of it has often been accompanied by grave doubts as to its potency outside the sphere of man's direct relationship to God. Often, too, it has been thought of as confined to a single instance in history, instead of being so found in that one instance that it can then be discovered everywhere. We did not really believe in what the Cross stands for, that love, humility, and self-sacrifice are the highest forms of power, that in them the majesty of God himself is revealed to us. In Kierkegaard's phrase, we were admirers of Christ and not his followers. We can never therefore be sufficiently grateful that one came to us from the East into the very texture of whose life the Cross was woven and who

showed us that the ancient rule measures greatness by service is still the only valid one.

Few even of those who most questioned Gandhi's political activities were able to resist his appeal at this point: There is something in his self-identification with the child-widow and the outcaste which provides a better commentary on the Gospels than all the books that have yet been written. The parable of the Good Samaritan takes on a new meaning when read in the light of his constant effort to break down communal barriers. His readiness to fast unto death was strange judged by our Western standards, and there were those who saw in it a more than usually subtle method of exerting pressure on one's political opponents. But Gandhi did not think of it in this way, it was the natural outcome of a love which yearned over men and which was willing to suffer itself while incapable of inflicting suffering upon others. Last of all, his death enrols him with the martyr-spirits of all time. He fell a victim to the very mistrust and fear he spent his life in combating, and if his death proves more potent than even his life was, that justifies us still more in seeing in him a God-sent illustration of the Cross.

4. The writer of this essay is a Christian and Gandhi was not. Influenced though he was by the N. T. and the personality of Jesus, Hinduism was his spiritual home to the end. We who are Christians must accept that and not allow it to detract from our admiration for him. For he showed us the essential unity of the religious spirit which underlies the most diverse forms of religious expression. This does not mean that there is some common essence which can be distilled out of all religions and that Gandhi represented this. He was of the Hindu tradition and as such he accepted positions which we who are Christians are bound to reject. What we see in him is that worship of God in spirit and truth, that pure and utter devotion of the human spirit to what is of eternal worth which we would fain reproduce in ourselves. Christendom is rebuked by the fact that God spoke to us in our day by one who came

to us from outside. Yet we should rejoice in that, because it shows us that God's Spirit is at work in all men, under whatever form they worship him.

5. Finally, we shall be for ever indebted to Gandhi because he broke down the barrier which with us has for so long separated religion from politics. The Master's injunction to give to Caesar his due and to God his, has long been misunderstood among us as though implying that politics and religion form two separate spheres, each subject to its own laws. Hence, on the one hand, the soulless and mercenary character of political life in some countries, and on the other hand, the feverish or cunning manufacture of political religions in others. Yet even so, while politics is largely a set of devices for furthering the material progress of a people while maintaining internal order, there are times, especially when war threatens, when it needs to be vivified by the impact upon it of ideals which it cannot itself produce. Gandhi showed us how to make political action an instrument of spiritual endeavour.

That he succeeded entirely in purging politics of its questionable elements few would claim. Critics are apt to assert that non-cooperation, for example, was an expedient of doubtful moral value, a surrender to political exigency of a religious ideal which should in fact have bound him to strict non-resistance. In that they show their misunderstanding of what love means. Love is as much concerned to resist the evil which brings misery into the world as it is to treat even the evil-doer as a brother. Merely to give way to another who does evil is not to love him: he must be opposed in what he is doing even while in himself he is valued and esteemed. Further, if we grant—as we surely must—that a spiritual ideal suffers some loss when it is translated into mass-action, it is better to risk such a loss than to remain inactive in the interests of an impossible purity. And who was more concerned than Gandhi to guard against such deterioration and to reduce it to a minimum?

What Gandhi did in this sphere was to offer to the world a third alternative in addition to those already open to it. Faced with evil, we imagine that we must either fight or submit. Under modern conditions, these seem equally terrible, though the former is perhaps the less dishonourable, till we consider where it may take us before the war is over. But this is the dilemma which most thoughtful people in the West had to face in 1939 and are facing to-day. That freedom is sacred we are sure after what we have seen of countries where it has been lost. Yet can freedom be preserved any better by the use of the atom-bomb? Not to fight is to surrender to tyranny, to fight is to bring upon Europe a disaster so terrible that it is difficult to see how freedom can survive it. Yet what third possibility is open to us?

Gandhi had faith that there is such a third possibility, a resistance of the spirit which is stauncher even than that of the soldier though it is utterly free from violence and hatred. We in the West are feeling our way towards this, but we are still, far from willing to contemplate it seriously, as can be seen from the various church reports on atomic warfare. There is no perception in any of these that there is a way of the Cross, the way of one who neither draws the sword against evil nor yields his soul to it. Can we appropriate that lesson in time? On the answer to that question the future of our civilization depends. No doubt, we have much to learn of what spiritual resistance means in international relations and we shall make many mistakes before we have discovered what it is and how to use it. There will be those who declaim against it as Utopian. But we can reply, first, that it is even more Utopian to save civilization by destroying it in atomic warfare, and, secondly, that in this the new vision of Gandhi does but reinforce the ancient splendour of that Cross which we of the West, at least, are pledged, not only to worship but also to follow.

## GANDHI'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

ROY WALKER

It is perhaps typical of our way of looking at things that when we see an Indian and an Englishman together the first thing we notice is the different colour of their skins and the last thing we observe is the 'fundamental affinity between British and Indian reactions, physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual' to which no less experienced an observer than Lord Pethick Lawrence has recently testified. In somewhat the same way the first thing we notice about the cultures of India and the West is the difference, and very often we do not penetrate to the level where community of insight and aspiration is to be found. Yet a culture may be likened to a language. It is the apt means of communication for a certain people or peoples in a given era of human history, and although language reacts on thought, conditioning what can be clearly expressed, it is broadly true that all languages provide the means of expressing all important truths. One of the great needs of our time is for what may be called cultural linguists, men not only of learning but of insight sufficient to interpret East and West to each other; men, in short, like the late Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. The danger of allowing this function to fall into incapable hands is great. Already identities are being lost in a great boiling together of traditions. It is as though, having made the simple discovery that every flower in a garden has its own beauty, the gardener should resolve to graft them all together and so produce one really good flower, or shall we say a flower to end flowers? The contrary danger is an obstinate cultural provincialism whose self-respect is usually centred in the dogmatic belief that its own particular civilization is the 'best', not only for its own people but for everyone else. This is a fault common in the West and the root of much prejudice against open-

hearted reception of the world-message of Mahatma Gandhi. 'That sort of thing may be all very well in India,' people will say, 'but I can't see it happening over here.' Or, 'Non-violence worked with the British, because we are by and large a tolerant and just people. It couldn't work against people like the Nazis or long-range weapons of mass-destruction like the atom bomb.'

Yet Gandhi is not so much an Eastern as a universal figure, his philosophy and example are essentially valid for all humanity or none because they work at a level deeper than that at which cultural, social and technological variations are of conclusive importance. To judge Gandhian pacifism irrelevant because Gandhi was an Indian is not much more sensible than objecting to Marxism at the outset on the score that Marx was a German. Five questions, all obvious but seldom put, will decide whether or not the Gandhian example is of universal significance: (1) What were the sources of Gandhi's beliefs? (2) What were those beliefs? (3) What had Gandhi himself to say about the world beyond India? (4) What is the judgment of competent opinion? (5) What is the response of individual conscience? I will try to indicate in what direction answers to these questions may be found.

Gandhi was a Hindu. But it was essential to his position that 'though religions are many, Religion is one.' 'My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism.' It is, therefore, incorrect to speak of the New Testament and other scriptures as secondary influences on Gandhi. The three other formative influences from literary sources were the Christian pacifism of Tolstoy as expressed in *The Kingdom of God is Within You*: the visionary communism of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* (which the author considered his finest work): and the mystical anarchism of Thoreau's essay on *Civil Disobedience*, which supplied not only the name but much of the substance of this advanced phase of assertive non-violent direct action. It is a fact, to

which the present world crisis adds solemn significance, that of the three important modern influences on this great Indian one was a Russian, one an Englishman, and one an American. Moreover, Gandhi's development took place *not* in India but in London and South Africa. It was in London that he read for the first time, and in the English verse translation of his friend Sir Edwin Arnold, his favourite Hindu scripture, *Bhagavad Gita*: and that he changed from a man restrained from meat-eating only by a vow given to his mother, which he fully intended to set aside after his parents' death, to a vegetarian by choice and principle—a transformation brought about by reading Henry Salt's *Plea for Vegetarianism* and other vegetarian books and by his association with the London Vegetarian Society on whose Executive he served and to whose weekly newspaper he contributed his first published articles early in 1891. In the long struggle for Indian rights in South Africa that ended—for the time being—just before the break of the First World War, Gandhi's thought reached maturity, and there is nothing essentially new after the little book he wrote on the voyage back to South Africa, *Hind Swaraj*, Indian Home Rule, published in 1909. Most of Gandhi's struggles were against European opponents, usually the British. That alone would make them highly relevant to the West, inasmuch as they reveal the reactions of Western statesmen and peoples to non-violent methods of resolving conflict.

No adequate account of Gandhi's outlook can be given here, but the proposition that 'Religion is one' is the root of the matter. 'I enter politics only in so far as it develops the religious faculty in me', he said. His political decisions were valid by their spiritual content, not by objective tests of expediency alone. This spiritual content is of universal relevance. It may be necessary to study the circumstances of a struggle to see the spiritual significance of a particular decision; once seen the essential human gesture can be recognized and reversed. The criticism of Gandhi as 'an astute politician'—implying not the relevance of

goodness to large-scale human problems, but a Jekyll and Hyde combination of saint and party-boss—is absolutely false; indeed many of Gandhi's major decisions, from the halting of the Non-Co-operation Campaign as it moved forward into Civil Disobedience to his deliberate absence from Delhi on village work in Bengal while the fate of India was being settled with the Cabinet Mission, are flatly incomprehensible as judgments of political expediency. Gandhi would have agreed with William Blake: 'Religion is politics and politics is brotherhood.'

Gandhi's references to the world beyond India, and to the West in particular, leave no doubt that he regarded his beliefs as relevant to other civilizations. It is important to realize that his doctrine of *Swadeshi*, or reliance on and working through the immediate environment, was a discipline that limited him to advice and action within the context of Indian affairs for the greater part of his public life; but he always looked outwards to the horizons of the globe itself. What he wrote in *Harijan* a few months before his death was not at all different from what he had written in *Young India* in the early twenties: 'I said at the Asiatic Conference that I hoped the fragrance of the non-violence of India would permeate the whole world. I often wonder if that hope will materialize.' During his visit to England in 1931 he advised non-co-operation with the dole system to the British unemployed, and in Switzerland on his way home he told Pierre Ceresole that he believed the peoples of Europe were capable of non-violent action but that the sort of leadership the times called for was lacking. He later advised the Jews in Central Europe to use corporate non-violence against Nazi persecutions; he advised Czechoslovakia to defend her freedom against German invaders by non-violence in 1939, and made similar suggestions to Poland in response to Paderewski's appeal to him later in the same year. To Britain at war he addressed in 1940 an appeal to cease fighting by force of arms and to take up non-violent

struggle for justice. Non-violence was the whole tenor of his appeal to the Great Powers met at San Francisco to form the United Nations Organization and his only answer to the atom bomb. Unquestionably, Gandhi did not regard his belief as relevant only to Asiatic conditions.

But was he right? Reviewing a discussion of non-violence by Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan recently, the *Times Literary Supplement* conceded that 'Here indeed we may learn something from the East....' Aldous Huxley, in his essay *Science, Liberty and Peace* made some amends for an eloquent silence about Gandhi in his earlier works, answering those 'who think that the record of Gandhi's achievements is irrelevant to the historical and psychological situation of the industrial West' with the forecast, 'In the years ahead it seems possible that *satyagraha* may take root in the West. . . .' Dr. G. N. Dhawan, M.A., Ph.D. in the first full-length study of *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (1946) judges it to be 'the most original contribution of India to political thought and political practice'. 'In group relations, even more than individual life, conflicts and violence have become chronic to-day and threaten the very existence of civilized life. In Satyagraha Gandhiji has given to the world a technique for fighting, in a creative, constructive way, aggression and exploitation in intergroup and international relations'. The list could be swelled with the names of Krishnalal Shridharani, Bart de Ligt, and almost all the distinguished people who contributed to the volume of tributes edited by Radhakrishnan in 1939. Appraisal and discussion are, of course, a vital part of the process of understanding the life and inspiration of a man who, by any standard, was one of the greatest of the age, and by my criteria the greatest. But Gandhiji's own words, brought home to us again and with new poignancy by the grand and terrible manner of his death, are wise. 'Abstract truth has no value, unless it incarnates in human beings who represent it by proving their readiness to die for it'. How

far has the truth of non-violence been successfully incarnated in the West as yet, not only in the private lives of a few exceptionally wise and gifted men but in the historic struggles of our time? I think there is little doubt that the most significant example was the magnificent resistance to the Quisling regime and the German occupying force offered by the Norwegian people during the years 1940-45. The resistance began, of course, with a brief military struggle and was chequered towards the end with increasing sabotage and terrorism mostly organized from abroad. Yet, not only in my own Gandhian appraisal, but in the longer work by a non-pacifist Member of Parliament, William Warbey, it is recognized that the resistance was predominantly non-violent and remarkably successful.

The last of my five questions was: What is the response of individual conscience? In many ways it is the most important question of all. Gandhi has already been surrounded by our commentaries, explanations and adaptations, overlaid by our tributes. We mean well, but we come between you and the man himself, and that is not good. The best advice is to seek out something that Gandhi himself has written; no easy matter in these days when almost every worthwhile book is out of print, but most libraries have one or more of C. F. Andrews' versions of Gandhi, or some other compilation. Before you have read many pages you will know that the man whose mind and personality you have sought out has the gift—not in the least a literary one—of speaking simply and directly to the humanity that is common to us all. It is because he has this quality in pre-eminent degree that he is the only valid world figure to-day. There has been much talk, some of it positively superstitious, of tapping the power of non-violence in the West; few statesmen and religious leaders have cared to recognize that Gandhi's power was in his appeal to the best in human nature, and that the ability to evoke response grew with the confidence of the common people that Gandhi had indeed renounced war,

that non-violence was his final creed for all occasions. Now that atomic and bacteriological warfare threaten all with annihilation, and the last vestige of 'defensive war' has disappeared forever, the world waits, with the sands running out, for spiritual and political leaders in both East and West who will learn from Gandhi the indispensable condition on which influence for good is granted to men.

# GANDHIJI'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CULTURE AND RELIGION

SOPHIA WADIA

WHAT WAS Gandhiji's most dynamic contribution as a citizen of the world and a lover of mankind to the culture and religion of humanity?

But what is culture? Culture is the expression of the humane in man. It is not the outcome of mere learning or skill. It does not spring from the head, but has its roots in the heart. It is the wisdom which descendeth from above, from the Light of the Spirit, that wisdom described by James as 'pure, peaceable, and gentle. . . full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.' And his affirmation: 'And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace' admirably applies to Gandhiji. For did he not make it his life-mission to sow the seed of righteousness for the moral regeneration of humanity? By preaching through precept and example the Way of Peace, the Way of Ahimsa, Gandhiji has challenged the world and awakened us to the recognition of our true human destiny.

Mankind is not a superior pack of wolves. Its law is not therefore the law of the jungle. We have a higher law to fulfil, the Law wrought within our Soul nature, the Law of Love and of Brotherhood. 'Non-violence is the law of our species.'

Says Gandhiji:

Man's aim in life is not to add from day to day to his material prospects and to his material possessions, but his predominant calling is from day to day to come nearer to God.

And in another place:

We were born men in order to realise God who

dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation. But to realise God is to see Him in all that lives, *i.e.*, to realise our oneness with all creation.

Thus, Gandhiji's ultimate aim is to lift the human species to a higher moral and spiritual plane. To him life is a progressive realization of Truth, and Truth is God, just as God is Truth. He says:

Life is an aspiration. Its mission is to strive after perfection, which is self-realisation. The ideal must not be lowered because of our weaknesses or imperfections. I am painfully conscious of both in me. The silent cry daily goes out to Truth to help me to remove these weaknesses and imperfections of mine.

And a little later he exclaims:

Every failure brings me nearer to realization.

From Gandhiji's example we can all derive faith and hope. He sees each one of us potentially, as we might become, and in that confident vision he energises us and inspires us to try, try and ever keep trying.

That is the great Soul-force back of Gandhiji's life and teachings. It is born of his faith in the ultimate redemption of mankind. And that faith is his religion, a religion which far transcends Hinduism of any other 'ism.'

He tells us:

Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion . . . but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within, and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the Soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.

What a beautiful and dynamic concept of religion: 'That which binds one indissolubly to the truth within'; 'that which ever purifies'; 'that which leaves the Soul utterly restless until it has found' peace in its reunion with the Divine Spirit, or God!

How different his concept of religion from the closed and narrow view of religion as the mere observance of outward rules and the performance of rites and ceremonies! No wonder the orthodox, entrenched in their citadels of arrogant and exclusive intolerance and selfish and cruel unbrotherliness, shuddered and grew angry, and angrier . . . But what of the scriptures? you may ask. How did Gandhiji look upon the scriptures themselves? Does he call himself a Hindu and deny the Sastras?

Gandhiji is essentially a freethinker, his way is that of the Spirit and so he will not be enfeathered by religious tradition or prejudice.

He says:

I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense.

And, condemning untouchability, he applies this principle fearlessly and challenges the orthodox:

I consider untouchability to be a heinous crime against humanity . . . I know no argument in favour of its retention, and I have no hesitation in rejecting scriptural authority of a doubtful character in order to support a sinful institution.

And again:

Let us not deceive ourselves into the belief that everything that is written in Sanskrit and printed in Shastra has any binding effect upon us. That which is opposed to the fundamental maxims of morality, that which is opposed to trained reason, cannot be claimed as Shastra, no matter how ancient it may be.

What were the fundamental principles which formed the foundation of Gandhiji's triple ideal—that of Truth, Love and Service? And first hear what he tells us about these three great concepts—Satya, Ahimsa and Seva.

The word 'Satya' (Truth) is derived from 'Sat' which means being and nothing is or exists in reality except Truth . . . And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge, pure knowledge . . . And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss.

Devotion to this Truth is the sole reason for our existence. All our activities should be centred in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. And what is the means to Truth?

Ahimsa, Non-Violence . . . Without Ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is difficult to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say which is the obverse and which is the reverse? Nevertheless *Ahimsa* is the means. Truth is the end.

Love is the only remedy for hate.

Hatred ever kills, love never dies. Such is the vast difference between the two. What is obtained by love is retained for all time. What is obtained by hatred proves a burden in reality, for it increases hatred. The duty of a human being is to diminish hatred and to promote love.

Service to others is true sacrifice.

The duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast.

There is no deliverance and no hope without sacrifice, discipline and self-control.

Thus Gandhiji's religion of Truth, Love and Service calls us to purify ourselves of all egotism, to get rid of all

prejudices, to give up the dire heresy of separateness that weans us from our fellow-beings Says Bapu:

True religion is not narrow dogma. It is not external observance. It is faith in God, and living in the presence of God ; it means faith in a future life, in truth and ahimsa.

Gandhiji's Religion transcends all creeds, is above all denominations, soars beyond the ugly divisions of sectarianism and bigotry.

Dharma, *i.e.*, religion in the highest sense of the term, includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. You may recognise it by the name of Truth, not the honesty of expedience but the living Truth that pervades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation.

Religion is dear to me ; and my first complaint is that India is becoming irreligious. Here I am not thinking of the Hindu and Mahomedan or the Zorastrian religion but of that religion which underlies all religions. We are turning away from God.

Unless I accept the position that all religions are equal, and I have as much regard for other religions as I have for my own, I would not be able to live in the boiling war around me. Any make-believe combination of spiritual forces is doomed to failure if this fundamental position is not accepted. I read and get all my inspiration from the Gita. But I also read the Bible and the Koran to enrich my own religion. I incorporate all that is good in other religions.

The tree of Religion is the same, there is not that physical equality between the branches. They are all growing and the person who belongs to the growing branch must not gloat over it and say, 'Mine is a superior one!' None is superior, none is inferior to the others.

. . . There is no religion that is absolutely perfect. All are equally imperfect or more or less perfect, hence the conclusion that Christianity is as true and good as my own religion. But so also about Islam or Zoroastrianism or Judaism.

The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of the Christians and the Ishwara of Hindus. Even as there are numerous names of God in Hinduism, there are many names of God in Islam. The names do not indicate individuality but attributes, and little man has tried in his humble way to describe mighty God by giving Him attributes, though he is above all attributes, Indescribable, Immeasurable. Living faith in this God means acceptance of the brotherhood of mankind. It also means equal respect for all religions. If Islam is dear to you, Hinduism is dear to me and Christianity is dear to the Christians. It would be the height of intolerance—and intolerance is a species of violence—to believe that your religion is superior to other religions and that you would be justified in wanting others to change over to your faith.

Thus Gandhiji's religion is the religion of Brotherhood and that Brotherhood extends to the lowest and the poorest of creation, includes the dumb brute and the meanest insect. It is the corollary of his vision of the oneness of the Universe. God is truly omnipresent, *i.e.*, present everywhere, all-pervasive and, if so, to serve God is to serve all living things and to regard all men as brothers and all women as sisters.

Gandhiji ever felt that love for all his fellow-beings whom he served disinterestedly to the last:

I claim to be a humble servant of India and humanity and would like to die in the discharge of such service.

Just as Gandhiji's patriotism is subservient to his religion, so are his socialism and democracy rooted in his spiritual

perception of the One Supreme Self. He tells us so himself, drawing our attention to the first verse of the *Ishopanishad* which captivated him.

That verse is:

All this—whatever there is in this universe—is pervaded by Deity. Renounce all and enjoy. Do not covet the wealth of another.

Commenting upon this verse Gandhiji writes:

I suggest to you that the truth that is embedded in this very short mantra is calculated to satisfy the highest cravings of every human being—whether they have reference to this world or to the next . . . This mantra tells me that I cannot hold as mine anything that belongs to God, and if my life and that of all who believe in this mantra has to be a life of perfect dedication, it follows that it will have to be a life of continual service of our fellow creatures.

We all know to-day, to our shame and cost, that his aspiration was fulfilled and that he died in the noble discharge of his self-imposed service.

He held humanity as one indivisible and undivided family and, in his own words, he knew 'no distinction between relatives and strangers, countrymen and foreigners, white and coloured, Hindus and Indians of other faiths, whether Muslims, Parsis, Christians or Jews.'

This all-embracing love for the whole of humanity prompted him to take up the cause of the poor and the oppressed, nay, to identify himself with those who were afflicted and exploited, and thus it is that he said:

If I have to be reborn, I should wish to be born an untouchable so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition.

It is not the place here to estimate his application of *Ahimsa* to politics, but if we believe true progress for man

lies in the growth of the Soul, then we must recall the ethical implication of *Ahimsa* for the individual.

Says Gandhiji:

The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving-kindness.

And he warns us: 'This we cannot do unless we are very wakeful, ever vigilant, ever striving.'

He strove for the metamorphosis of selfishness, rivalry and cruelty into mutual forbearance and fraternal co-operation and by so doing Gandhiji proved himself a true reformer, one in a long chain of Sages and Saints, prophets and devotees, major or minor it does not matter, who all lived and laboured for the elevation of the human race. Gandhiji's life of service spread its own light 'amid th' encircling gloom' and who can doubt to-day that we stand before a solemn choice, either to continue in the way of the flesh, deepening the conflict within each one of us and among us all with its grave dangers of increasing reliance upon violence, or to strive for the purification of lust and egotism and thereby establish more friendly relations among people and ultimately gain that Wisdom from above, the Culture of the Spirit 'full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling or partiality and without hypocrisy?'

Gandhiji's highest contribution is his pointing to the way of the Spirit. For those satisfied with strife and envy, violence and confusion, with that wisdom which James designates as earthly, sensual and devilish, Gandhiji's teaching holds no inspiration. He is not 'conformed to this world' but calls for the transformation of this world into one where Justice, Kindness and Love will reign paramount and selfishness, indifference and brutality will have disappeared. His call is to the kingdom of heaven:

I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth,  
I am striving for the kingdom of heaven, which is

spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the *Gita*, I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. So my patriotism is for me a stage of my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace.

For that land of eternal freedom and peace we are all headed, although but few of us are aware of it. Gandhiji's body is no more. But his Soul still beckons us, inviting us to go forward on the Path he walked. May the Power that radiated through Gandhiji become a living centre in each heart that loved him and that wishes to be true to him!

## LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,  
    Lead thou me on ;  
The night is dark, and I am far from home,  
    Lead thou me on.  
Keep thou my feet ; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene ; one step enough for me.  
I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou  
    Should'st lead me on ;  
I loved to choose and see my path ; but now  
    Lead thou me on.  
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,  
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.  
So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
    Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
    The night is gone,  
And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

—*J. H. Newman.*

# MAHATMA GANDHI AND RELIGION

SATIS CHANDRA MUKERJI

## I

GANDHI'S religion is not to be summarized or compressed into a few articles of faith ; nor could it be confined merely to its personal aspects. For a real exposition of Gandhi's religion in all its varied features, one must survey it from a wide, comprehensive standpoint. For Gandhi is nothing, if he is not by his whole make-up a universalist, or an internationalist, if you please, although he chooses to pose before the world at large as if his whole work was confined within the limits of his native India. Therefore, a magazine article would hardly do justice to Gandhi on his religious side, for there is always the risk of misinterpretation or misunderstanding in any attempt to review him from a narrow standpoint. Nevertheless it is possible, I take it within the limits of space at my disposal to present him in that essential character of his which distinguishes or rather contra-distinguishes him from all other workers in the field of religion. But if so, it would be a mere introduction to the study of Gandhi's religion in all its manifold activities and applications.

The thing which distinguishes Gandhi from everybody else, including professors and teachers of religion is that he makes no distinction of religion as a thing apart from life. Whence it follows that from his point of view, the secular and the religious in life must not remain separated and contra-distinguished one from another ; but that, on the contrary religion must permit, pervade and transform life and its varied activities. Thus Gandhi would spiritualize the politics, education, commerce, social life and the economic and industrial activities of a country ; and thus inform each with a high common purpose and make of

them a unity expressing itself in a manifold diversity. If, then, the unifying factor of religion be given the go-by and a wall of separation be put up between the secular and the religious in life, then, according to Gandhi, religion is made to abdicate its high position, is relegated to a back-seat and ceases to perform its true function, the function for which it exists.

Not only that; but activities that draw no sustenance from the spiritual nature of man, but derive all their energy and motive-power from the non-spiritual side of man's composition, are bound, after running their allotted course, to end in disaster and ruin. Therefore, says Gandhi, to bolster up a materialistic civilization as a thing of beauty and joy for ever is wilfully to blind oneself to the doom which must inevitably overtake it. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi's declared verdict on modern civilization is that it is 'A nine day's wonder', seeing that it must inevitably decline and decay by the very law of its being. Matter cannot sustain itself by itself ever so long. It can only sustain itself by the power of the spirit and no civilization boasting only of its material triumphs and glories can stand the test of time.

The second thing to remember about Gandhi's religion is, as will be seen, a mere corollary from the first. Not only should secular activities be pervaded and permeated by the spirit of religion; but Gandhi would seek in a way to wipe out the distinction between the secular and the religious. For, according to Gandhi, if we are to be truly religious, we must not feel that our daily lives could be split up into two separate categories which either antagonize one another, or pursue parallel paths. In other words, Mahatma Gandhi points out, if we have to live our lives, our living must be truly religious, not only at core, but also, and for that very reason, at every point on its wide circumference. That is to say, the moment an activity gets divorced from religion or is relegated to a separate or subordinate category, that very moment, one

begins to live a double life. And it is a life which more often than not pulls in opposite ways and takes one farther and farther away from the centre of one's being. And so having lost one's anchor, one is dragged along down the slope of life, a process which ends in self-contradictions, in discord and destruction.

## II

IN THE modern world, everywhere the idea rampant about the relation between religion and worldly activities is that the two represent independent forms and categories of life and must not be mixed up each with the other. In other words, the prevailing opinion is that the religious man aims at something peculiar to his own mental and moral needs. While on the other hand the man pursuing worldly activities is dominated by an aim which is different, and this, it is contended, must not be allowed to be interfered with, controlled or regulated by the claims of the religious life. It is argued that secular life and its activities have a sufficient dignity and worth of their own to be capable of a course of evolution which is honourable by itself. Therefore, it can and must stand on its own legs and need no extraneous aid from religion. Gandhi's view, as I understand it, is, that secular life whether national, international or individual, so far as it is not levelled up or buttressed by the forces of religion must inevitably in process of time pursue the down-grade path, ending in disaster and ruin. It has no virtue or strength of its own to sustain it for long. Therefore, if a secular civilization is able to pursue its course for any prolonged period of time and is helpful to humanity, it will be found that this is because that civilization was able to assimilate into its structure those higher qualities of life which lie at the root of all religion. In other words secular activities unregulated, undisciplined and unformed by those factors of higher life which go into the basic constitution of all

religion are essentially factors of disintegration, *i.e.*, of conflict and separation. That is why the secular civilizations of the past, in so far as they represented the material or non-spiritual side of human nature, whether working in groups, or in nations, or in imperial aggregates have had their day and are no more. And history also records that civilizations based on theocracy, because of their alliance with and dependence on monarchies, republics, or empires become so tainted and corrupted by irreligion that they have had similarly an inglorious ending.

There is therefore a conflict between religion and life, meaning by life all activities which are carried on without reference to the claims of the religious or higher life. Gandhi wants to bridge this gulf between religion and life ; and, as already pointed out, he does it by declaring that our present outlook on life must undergo a vital transformation and that there ought to be no distinction made of religion as a thing apart from life. To pursue the matter a little farther, he points out that if life is separated from religion, it descends ; whereas if it is pursued in identification with or close correlation to religion, it ascends. But it is open to us to pursue either the path of ascent or the path of descent. And so we can abolish the conflict or we can perpetuate it and take the consequence. In Gandhi's view, therefore, the conflict subsists under present conditions, because life and its doings are not utilised to serve as means of treading the upward path, and religion is not used as a lever wherewith to lift that life on to that path. It is therefore Gandhi's object to transform life, purging it of its sources of error and mischief and so using it as an invaluable aid to the ushering in of the higher life. In other words, the conflict between religion and life is to be ended by giving the latter a new orientation—by placing before it a distinctly new objective, namely, the development of the higher man through life's activities. For, according to Gandhi, life in its varied aspects affords just the necessary stimulus or environment to help a man on to the up-

ward path. In Gandhi's eyes, the environment is there not to afford him opportunities for endless self-gratification which only creates and perpetuates weakness of spirit. But it is there for man to wrestle with, so that by such wrestling, he may gain the necessary internal strength, which is the strength of the soul. In other words, Gandhi declares that man has to live his life, whether national, international or individual, so that he may not grow weaker and weaker every day, by following the path of self-indulgence, greed and cupidity. But he has to live his life in order that he may justify himself to himself as a spiritual being unconquered and unconquerable by matter and all these forces of onslaught that owe their origin to matter.

### III

THE higher life for the unfoldment of which Gandhi would use the life of the world and its manifold activities as a lever is essentially a life which is strength incarnate. There could be no true religious life for him which is not synonymous with the possession of strength. Where there is no such strength, where there is fear or cowardice, or where the individual quails before the possessor of superior instruments of violence, there Gandhi would say, the true religious life is not born. No rites, rituals or any other external forms of religion, no uttering of a *mantram*, no mere belief in any revealed scriptures, no assent to any articles of faith, however sincere, would, in Gandhiji's eyes, acquit a man of irreligion, if he had not the internal strength which defies fear of man or of his instruments of aggressive violence.

Therefore Gandhi's religion is the religion of strength. But it is no borrowed strength such as militarism and the military nations of the West are proud of. For it is not the strength that comes from the possession of power, or of external weapons of aggression ; or accumulated territories, or accumulated man-power. But it is such strength as man might have and to which physical might must owe allegiance and have to render obedience.

The point to remember is Gandhi's external insistence on the cardinal spiritual fact that man is no weakling but a perpetual reservoir of strength which has got only to be tapped, and that the sources of that strength constitute man's essential being. It is this strength which is the vital thing in him while everything else in Gandhi's eyes is subsidiary or may even pass as irrelevant. For instance, belief in God is, for Gandhi, hardly the genuine thing, if it is found to hang on the man as an extraneous thing. In other words, such a belief is no real good, if it is unable to open out the hidden springs of his strength, the strength that is in every man inherent and subsisting as an inalienable part of his being. For Gandhi, therefore, the acid test of religion or of religious life is, how far it has evoked in the votary of religion the internal strength that lies dormant in him and which only can give him the power to challenge and defy matter and all the forces of matter.

#### IV

THE relation between this strength—the true strength of the spirit, which must come to every man that claims to be religious—and the power that comes to man through the control of his environment, has to be properly grasped if we must truly appreciate Gandhi's ideas about religion as the only force or factor that can rescue secular life. In these days of applications of science to life—of conquest of material nature and consequent self-glorification by man—there is danger of his forgetting the sources of his true strength—of forgetting that these lie not outside of but within his own self. For if matter can be conquered by man's intelligence it is equally true that such conquest becomes for him a pyrrhic victory the moment his courage fails him and he has to rely exclusively for self-defence and self-preservation upon the material instruments of his own invention. In other words, the moment man felt himself helpless in the face of external opposition, unless he was

re-inforced by the power of material contrivances, that moment the spirit of cowardice begotten of such helplessness, ill-will and hate, would have overtaken, captured and taken possession of him. In such circumstances what matters it, if while losing his soul, a man is the proud possessor of a thousand and one other things, which whatever their value, cannot divest him of the fear and weakness which eats into his vitals. For always there is for man, the fear of the sword—the fear, namely, of superior violence, and Christ's teaching, 'All that they take by the sword shall perish by the sword' acquires in this connection an added significance. For if the present race among modern civilized nations of the West for armaments and for mechanization of warfare be traced back to its roots, it will be found that at the back of their minds is craven fear, the fear, namely, of superior physical might. It is the fear of people that have become progressively weak at heart, because of their having progressively cultivated faith, not in themselves but in the mechanical contrivances and instruments of external strength.

## V

To sum up: Mahatma Gandhi's teaching is that the development of the internal strength of man, a strength which is in no sense borrowed, but which is an efflorescence of his spirit—a natural unfoldment achieved through a course of intensive discipline, truly marks the growing religious life. Whence it follows that the repudiation by him, as a vital factor of his life, of all dependence upon the external instruments of aggression or of defence marks out the truly religious man. And it distinguishes him also from the motley crowd, that strut about on the world's stage in the full panoply of fear. And with force as an ally for fear comes fraud as an ever-ready handmaid to force. Thus it is that force seeks to entrench itself behind fraud, employing all the arts and contrivances of lying propaganda and lying diplomacy to keep up its morale. To repeat, in

Gandhi's vocabulary, the religious man and the strong man are synonymous or mutually convertible terms; for the religious man if he is worth his salt is never a coward, on the other hand, the true coward, Gandhi explains, is he who, when he had not the resources of material strength to fall back upon, would feel depressed, cowed down and helpless. For, true bravery, according to Gandhi, is not the bravery of the sword, but it is the bravery of the soul. Therefore the coward at heart doubly feels compelled to go on adding to his armoury, for he has not within him the power to do and dare to resist even without his armoury.

Judged by this standard, by this supreme test of bravery, Europe and America must be pronounced to have failed and failed egregiously. They have armed themselves to the teeth and are still arming themselves and have become almost incapable of disarming. They have progressively become weak at heart and cannot allay their fear of each other, unless they find themselves buttressed up by the forces of resourceful violence. That is why Gandhi feels that the modern nations of the West have been fast losing their moral and spiritual foothold, notwithstanding all the triumphs and glories of their present-day civilization. That is why, to borrow the phraseology of the Christian churches, they are daily drifting away from the true Christian ideal and are being swallowed up by 'paganism' and 'heathenism'. That is why Imperialism has reared its head under the ever-mastering impulse of territorial greed and cupidity, and political domination and economic exploitation of the ill-equipped and disorganized races of the earth by the armed powers of the West have followed in the wake of this paganism of the spirit. In other words, cowards at heart, they have also proved themselves to be bullies. That is why the Imperialist states are conjuring up from time to time visions of a 'Yellow Peril' or of an Asiatic menace, or even a menace from the native races of Africa. And so having lost their vital spirit instincts, these powers as pointed out already are seized also with a moral fear of their co-equals,

for they have no faith in each other. And the result is that they have all to get ready for the coming Armageddon, notwithstanding all the Pacts, Leagues and Alliances of Peace that have come into existence.

## VI

It is thus that Gandhi feels that the spirit of Satanism pervades the whole of the political and economic systems of Imperialistic nations of the East. And if he had declared that the British system of Imperial rule in India is Satanic in substance though not in form, it is because that system is marked and marred by the same spirit of Satanism as obtains in the West. Mahatma Gandhi therefore desires above all things to give a new orientation to the life of the world, and of the West in particular, because of the invasion of the East by the West ; to bring it back to its true bearings and to stop the process of its internal decay and putrefaction that has already set in. And his teaching is that the arrest of this process would not be possible unless the remedy adopted went to the root of the matter. And so neither formal and pious declarations of principles and ideals of national and international conduct ; not even pledges and pacts of the sort would ultimately stand the test, if these were not reinforced by that internal strength which would be an antidote to all external weakness. These pledges and pacts may contain within them the germs of 'great possibilities' as Gandhi himself recognizes. But the essential thing to remember is that they will ever remain as mere possibilities and never fructify, unless and until the civilized states of the West losing faith in the power of external, i.e. borrowed strength chose to turn back and pursue the path that leads to the development of their internal strength.

So Mahatma Gandhi's message to the world at large is the development of this internal strength of men, peoples, and nations. For such strength, as already pointed out, would be a true antidote to that spirit of helplessness, cowardice

and craven fear that must needs enter as a permanent element in the composition of people who have no other strength than the strength of the sword, and no other faith than the faith in the power of the sword. And his further message is that the affairs of life have to be so treated and utilized that instead of breeding internal weakness and fear, they may only evolve, evoke and unfold internal power and strength in men, peoples and nations.

Therefore Gandhi insists, as already pointed out, that if the Western world has to be lifted out of the grooves into which it has fallen and from which it calls out to be saved, it must change its whole angle of vision and envisage life in the new orientation. Gandhi does not preach that the world is all illusion or *māyā* ; nor does he preach as a substitute for life's activities, a life of contemplative retirement which is the life of the recluse. What, however, he undoubtedly preaches is that life's activities have to be pursued in a different way although pursued unceasingly as at present. And also, Gandhi holds firmly to the view that when civilized man has learnt to look at life and its affairs as a means to one supreme end, namely, the developing of that internal power and strength of which he is the eternal possessor and which belongs to him by native right—the strength, in other words, of his native manhood, whether looked at from the individual, the national or the international point of view—then the present nightmare which sits upon him will have vanished.

## VII

AND so we have arrived at the rock-bottom facts upon which the whole philosophical structure of Gandhi's religion, in its widest outlook, rests. We have shown that Gandhi's religion is the religion of strength. We have also shown that this strength is no borrowed strength, e.g. military strength—arms, ammunition, capital, man-power, etc. We have shown also that it is such strength as is inherent in

man (although requiring to be opened out); because it comes from what Gandhi calls the 'permanent element in human nature'.<sup>1</sup> Nor can such strength be said to be derived from one's declaration of faith in a certain creed; nor from assent given to certain doctrinal propositions laid down in the scriptures. For the strength comes from the inside through the development of 'the permanent element'. And lastly, we have seen that this development frees man from bondage to the power of material strength and cures him of the essential weakness that clings to one who looks only to the outside for strength and power.

Therefore it is this 'permanent element' in man's composition, Mahatma Gandhi declares with the utmost emphasis, 'that must find that full expression' in the manifold activities of man and redeem them from futility, error and mischief. If this 'full expression' is denied to it, Gandhi points out, neither would the world be freed from the clutches of perpetual weakness and fear, nor would man be able to come face to face with his Maker. On the other hand, if this 'full expression' be the objective of life and its activities, then there would be established a true correspondence between man, the world and the Divinity that shapes our ends. The pursuit by man through life's activities of this permanent part of his nature, therefore, in Gandhi's eyes is the most vital thing for him. For, its result is shown not only in the unfoldment of that strength which can give a challenge to the power of brute violence. But it is equally true, as Gandhi points out, that by such pursuit the whole of the impermanent, that is to say, the material side of human nature, would get transformed and purified. It is thus, says Gandhi, that 'Truth would stand revealed and the soul of man having found itself would find also its Maker.

Gandhi's view of religion must, therefore, in the first instance, be understood in this higher context. It is a view

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<sup>1</sup> *Vide Young India*, May 12, 1920 : Article "Neither a Saint nor a Politician."

which is neither exclusively Hindu, nor Muslim, nor Christian ; for it applies and appertains to all the different religions. It appears, therefore, that the intolerance of sects and creeds arises because of the initial omission to take note of and appreciate religion, in the higher or the universal aspect. And this synthetic view of religion which unites all particular religions, furnishes a clue not to the solution of the conflict between religion and religion ; but it furnishes also, as Gandhi has shown, a means of redeeming the life of the world and its secular activities. And it redeems by making these a means of discovering the true sources of the internal strength and power of man—by discovering, in other words, ‘the permanent element’ in his composition.

### VIII

GANDHI is a Hindu of Hindus, and if we must see to study his Hinduism, we can only effectively and usefully do so by studying and appraising in the first instance his view of religion in its synthetic aspect. For there is always considerable danger, according to Gandhi, in the pursuit of any particular religion without constant reference to the higher or universal aspect of all religions. Therefore in his pursuit and understanding of the type of religious life by the particular religion to which he owes allegiance, he continually harks back to the bedrock facts of the higher, i.e. the universal aspect. He would therefore call upon the Hindu, the Muslim, and the Christian, to understand and appreciate the injunctions of their respective scriptures in the light of this higher context. In doing this Gandhi feels that he is not only not misleading the votaries of the different religions, but he is holding them to be more faithful to their own faiths. In other words, in Gandhi's view, by his so doing, he would be helping them to become truer Hindus, truer Muslims or truer Christians, as the case may be. Gandhi's constant insistence on distinguishing between

the universal or synthetic aspect of religion and the particular aspects found expression in the different creeds and scriptures of the world has been for him most fruitful of results. It has saved him from falling into many of the pitfalls that beset the path of the orthodox religionist who with all his sincerity, is liable to be led away by the letter of the law. It has also saved Gandhi from imbibing the deadly poison of religious bigotry and fanatisms which has sounded the death-knell of many a devout soul. It has also saved him from being infected with virus of religious communalism which set up a perpetual barrier between man and man, poisons the sources of common life in a composite community and mocks at the doctrine of the brotherhood of man and of a common human family. And so his humanity has not suffered, because of his wide outlook—because he has never permitted himself to exalt his own particular religion or any other particular religion, above the higher, the universal aspect that transcends and yet explains all particular religions. And it is because of this that he sets his face against all proselytisation, feeling that man cannot grow from without, by subscribing to any articles of faith, but that he must grow from within and thus realize himself, that is to say, his own soul and its Maker.

Further, it is because Gandhi has in the pursuit of his religious life learnt to entrench himself behind the universal aspect of religion that he had been able all the more to appreciate and comprehend the particular aspects that have found expression in the various creeds and scriptures, and to give them all due allegiance and reverence. And again, because of his wider outlook on religion Gandhi has been able to bring out into clearer relief the special truths and ideals that underlie the religion to which he owes his particular allegiance—the religion of Hinduism which he declares, 'I love dearer than life itself'.<sup>1</sup> And lastly, because of his grasp of the universal aspect of religion that Mahatma

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<sup>1</sup> Vide 'Hinduism in *Young India*', 6 October, 1921.

Gandhi has been able to propound the ways and methods of the application of religion to life, and thus to place before the world a new goal and a new method of constructive effort to reach that goal. For Gandhi asserts with reiterated emphasis, man's life must not be for him a means of self-degradation whether individual or collective; but must serve the higher purpose of lifting him on to the upward path, and be rescued at the same time from those processes of decay and putrefaction that inevitably set in when life pursues its own wayward path uncontrolled and unregulated by religion.

## IX

IT WAS my purpose to lay before the readers the universal aspect of religion on which Gandhi builds up the whole fabric of his life's activities. It is to this aspect of religion that he refers when he insists that politics, or indeed, any other part of life's activities, must not be divorced from religion. And if we find Gandhi devoting himself with so much zest to the spiritualization of politics, 'it is only because', as he himself says, 'politics encircle us like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries'.<sup>1</sup> And so he continues, 'I must, therefore, wrestle with the snake, as I have been doing with more or less success consciously since 1894; unconsciously, so I have now discovered, ever since reaching years of discretion,' and again, 'Today the system of Government is so devised as to affect every department of our life. It threatens our very existence'.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, in Gandhi's own words, 'the politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine'.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in answering certain complaints as to why he went out of his way 'to introduce religion into politics', he pointed out

<sup>1</sup> *Young India*, 12 May, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> *Young India*, 25 Aug., 1920.

<sup>3</sup> *Young India*, 12 May, 1920.

that it was no religion in particular that he had requisitioned to his aid. It was neither Hinduism, nor Islam, nor Christianity, nor, for the matter of that, any other particular religion. Therefore, the charge laid against him must fail. It is from this wide point of view that we must try to understand Gandhi when he says—'I do not believe that religion has nothing to do with politics. Politics divorced from religion is a corpse fit only to be burnt'. In order, however, that he might not be misunderstood, Gandhi takes care to explain in positive terms the character of the religion which he seeks to apply to that domain of life's activities which is regarded as political. And he explains by pointing out that it is the Universal aspect of religion and not any particular aspect of it that he has sought to introduce into politics.

Thus, in *Young India*, 12 May, 1920, in the course of the article 'Neither a Saint nor a Politician': 'I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics. Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions. But it is the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.'

## MAHATMA GANDHIJ'S REVOLUTIONARY RELIGION

RALPH RICHARD KEITHAHN

TRUE RELIGION is primarily a way of living, not a ritual. It is a sensitiveness to the *Zeitgeist*, to the best of all times, to the Holy Spirit, to the Eternal. It is an identification with man in all his needs. It is a vital, creative force moving growing personalities to revolutionary activity in a world of need. It is the staying power of men who are concerned about the abundant life for all. It is the living faith of those who face evil courageously until their own lives are given that others may have what they never have had previously. It is the faith in Humanity that dares to throw away one's own life, with perhaps many talents, for even the humblest of men. It is the courage to live as though one lived for ever. It is the vision that knows that the life of the saint is but one small contribution of a total contribution of thousands of other similar men and women of similar vision—that the good life goes on for ever in its creative contribution. True Religion knows that there is but one great Human Family with but one Great Guiding and Sustaining Spirit. Thus the truly religious man finds himself at home in every historical religion and a brother to every earnest soul from whatever tradition or experience or national boundary he may come. In fact, for such a one life becomes a great adventure as he companions the pioneers of life whether it be in body or in spirit.

The truly outstanding religious pioneers have not been many. They do not appear often in history. However, they have not been limited to any one religious tradition, to any one nation or to any one period of time. This sustains the faith that we are one human family with a common Source. There is but one God and all mankind are His children. He has not had any favourites. His rain falls upon the evil as well as the good. And in my

own personal experience I have often felt very humble as I met one of another religious tradition who had realized as I had not or had most of those in my own religious tradition. I have tended to become more and more tolerant in the face of the fact of good men in other religious traditions and nations than that of my own.

### GANDHIJI—RELIGIOUS PIONEER

Gandhiji was one of the outstanding religious pioneers of all times. Several Christian leaders have spoken of him as the greatest since the time of Jesus. I do not think comparisons help us in such cases. For every religious genius is unique. The truth is universal ; it is profound ; it is of all times ; it is beyond the comprehension of any one mind or heart and of any one lifetime. Some of us believe that the Truth has been comprehended potentially and completely in some great lives. But we get nowhere in argument. For such claimants never agree among themselves what that Truth is in its completeness. And as the ages go by we seem to arrive at more complete comprehensions of the Truths of our Masters or Ways of Life. But whatever measure is used there seems to be no question but that this 'Great Soul' which has just walked in our midst is of the ages. Perhaps never has any religious leader been so soon universally acclaimed. Already there are movements both in the East and West to conserve his gift and to make it function more fully in the life of the peoples.

There have been many who have stood at the top in their personal religion—in their intimate relationship with the God they loved and worshipped. India has had many such great souls. Gandhiji's own personal religion was always challenging. He observed faithfully his morning and evening hours of prayer—his weekly day of silence. Congregational worship, wherever he went, was an important part of the day's programme ; until at the end all the world turned with him to the feet of Truth and turned to

him for the interpretation of that Truth in the life of the day. Even this personal or more intimate aspect of Gandhiji's religion is revolutionary for most of us. I know not a single one of the leaders of to-day whose personal religion is so intimate and so real. For generations many will turn to the reality of Gandhiji's religious living for inspiration and for strength.

### RELIGION WITH SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

But it was at the social level of Gandhiji's religion that many of us found his religious living most revolutionary. Those of us of the western religious tradition have found ourselves in a way of life which departmentalized life. On the Sabbath we put on our Sunday clothes and went to Church. For many of us religion was very real for the moment. But we came home, changed our clothes, faced the problems of life; and the noble professions of a few hours earlier-or of the day previous became those of another world. Thus on Monday we became deeply conscious of the sin of the world and thought of those happy days when we might dwell in heaven with the angels!! One of my very earnest college classmates was a man of idealism in his college days. Many of us thought of him as one of a very high religious profession and would not have been surprised had he gone into the Christian ministry. But he went into business. I shall never forget, after I had come to India, a letter came from him saying that religion and great ideals were satisfactory for college halls but they just would not work in the field of business! I fear that all too many in our western civilization have taken this for granted. Many would not want to live in a community where there was no church. And they are respectable. They would kill no one. They would rob no one. But they are not sensitive to the terrible evil of the mass killings of the day whether in a vicious economic system or in im-

perialistic wars. They are also not aware of the vicious dishonesty of most of modern advertising.

### A CASTELESS CLASSLESS SOCIETY

But with the 'Fakir of India' it was different. He took his religion into life. He challenged the world with the fact that 'social force' is greater than any other force and thus should be used to solve the great problems of the day. He called his God, Truth, and Truth, God. In his quiet hours he tried to comprehend that Truth. And he did it so well that he had an intuitive sense of what was right and what was wrong. He was not a reader of books. But he amazed people with his understanding of the heart of life's problems and with his revolutionary suggestions for constructive reforms that would lead to full freedom and democracy. I shall never forget those days when he started with a handful of weaklings—weaklings in the eyes of the world—to Dandi to make salt. On that pilgrimage he started a series of events that brought to India a realization of freedom in so brief a time that surprised many of his own intimate followers. I have been to many corners of India. I know the revolution that deeply earnest life has brought to many an individual life, to many a home, to many a business, to many a religious group, and I would say to India itself. With the banner, 'a casteless and classless society', I believe that Gandhiji has started a movement towards the further realization of Truth in all walks of life the like of which the world has not yet seen.

It is a revolution that is as revolutionary as that of communism. But it is a radical revolution as communism is not. It dares to trust its neighbour, it dares to believe that truth in itself is strong enough to win through to success. Communism has made a priceless gift to humanity. But it has taken with it the seeds of destruction when it has used the methods of dishonesty and violence. Gandhiji feared no man for he knew that Truth was all-powerful.

He knew that the Hitlers and Tojos were susceptible to the power of this love. He knew that although success as it is conceived in everyday life, might not be possible for the moment. But he was convinced that very quickly would it succeed if there was even but one man who practised it completely. And this man of truth was ever sensitive, perhaps growingly so, of his own weakness at this point. Perhaps that in part explains his own sensitiveness to his own darkness in the months before his death.

I believe this was the point at which Gandhiji's way of life was most revolutionary. He not only loved his God but he also loved his neighbour as himself—loved him so well that he trusted him completely. One was always amazed by the fact that all were to be found in his camp. All felt at home there. All came away feeling that they had been helped. This was the power of Truth at work. If the world can but take this 'soul force' into every phase of life what a different world we shall have! What a change there would be in the western world in particular! And in these days of atom bombs some of us believe that this method of revolutionary change is the only hope for civilization.

### INTER RELIGIOUS CO-OPERATION

Gandhiji challenged men to a 'respect for all religions'. When one thinks of the violence of religion in the past one cannot help but realize that his is no mean contribution. Certainly the missionary religions such as Christianity would be revolutionized if they took this approach to life seriously. It is not necessarily that all religions are equal. I took my own difficulties to Gandhiji at this point. He admitted that there were real differences in the great religions. But he maintained that they had their common Source ; that they had much in common in that men were brothers. And in this sense he maintained the equality of all religions. He then challenged me to produce a better

word which to this day I have been unable to do. But I am convinced that he brought to us a profound contribution in this regard. There is but the one truth. We are 'One Family Under Heaven'. There are astonishing similarities between the great religions. The adherents of the various religions have much to give to one another if they but respect one another. And all of us will be the better if our brother of another faith is more loyal to his own religious traditions at their best. Then as we bring our special and precious gifts to the common altar of humanity, I am one who trusts so much in the power of the Truth that His Spirit will guide all hearts to Him. I often feel that we Christians are all too untrustful of the Power of the Spirit of the Christ. If that Spirit is what I think it is then we need but bring it to our brother and the Spirit will take care of the rest. In fact, I believe that if we do not try to channel the spirit of the Christ, it will blossom forth into many flowerings which in the end will be a blessing to all as we come to the more complete realization of Truth.

### TRUE SINCERITY

Here again Gandhiji challenged us to revolutionary living when he asked every earnest follower of Truth as he knew it to be that Truth! Nothing can be more revolutionary. At the time of Gandhiji's death several of my friends took vows of comparative silence that they might realize Gandhiji's own way of life more fully. I often feel that we Christians might well take upon ourselves the vow of silence for some time until we also realize more fully in our own daily living the way of the Christ. How we are humiliated by so many things which are happening in the West to-day on the part of those who call Jesus their Master. I honestly believe that Gandhiji on the whole expressed the way of Jesus in his own daily living as has no other living Christian. If this is true then he was right that

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verbal profession of our own interpretations of the Truth is not so important as is the expression of the Living Truth in a world of lying and exploitation. What revolutions would take places in our homes, business, schools and churches if we but lived a small portion of the Truth we profess! Gandhiji did that and we may well understand.

### WITHOUT CASTE

One would like to go into detail as to the meaning of a 'casteless society' which Gandhiji envisaged as the expression of Truth in the world to-day. What a revolution even in our Churches if the white man could live without caste! What a revolution in the villages of India if caste would be completely eradicated! And nothing else can satisfy in these days!

I often wonder how the white man can live on so complacently in the face of the treatment of the negro in the U.S.A. or in Africa. Surely the white man has hard days ahead unless he changes his ways radically. Certainly the white man will always be ineffective as a world leader as long as he has this sin in his life. And India cannot have complete freedom as long as caste is in her midst. Gandhiji never limited himself to mere professions even here. The outcaste lived in his home. He refused to go to temples where the outcaste was not welcomed. He did more than any other in recent days for the Harijan.

### WITHOUT CLASS

One is tempted to define 'a classless society'. I believe we have yet to comprehend all of Gandhiji's contribution at this point. His khadi movement, the principle of swadeshi are fundamentally revolutionary in the capitalistic world in which we live. I am one who feels that there is no other satisfactory approach to economic centralization and the dictatorship it involves. Truth into our business

or as Kagawa once expressed it, Christianity into the Board of Trades! Perhaps this will be finally the most difficult revolution for the followers of Gandhiji to realize. The modern economic world is so much about us. Our physical needs are so great that we are constantly tempted to see the advantages of centralized economy and forget its deadly sting. Never has man found it easy to put aside Mammon and worship the true God. Jesus said it is more difficult for the rich man to enter the kingdom than for the camel to go through the needle's eye. And all of us want to be rich. Gandhiji's religion went to the market place and sometimes I feel that this was the place where he hurt the Britisher most. But it was not a matter of hurting. It was a matter of living the Truth. And the Truth makes all whole although radical operations may be necessary at the beginning.

#### FULFILMENT

Jesus once said that he came not to destroy but to fulfill the law and the prophets. Gandhiji was also faithful to his past tradition. Many thought him too much so. But that was in part his secret hold upon the ordinary man. He did not break with the best in his past. His whole programme and philosophy grow out of great concept and traditions of India such as: *Satya*, *Ahimsa*, *Asrama*, *Swadeshi* etc. That in itself was revolutionary for in these days it has become almost the norm to break with one's past. Out of that past Gandhiji found the source of tomorrow's revolutionary programme and the method was to be creative and constructive. He gave to a dying world the 'moral equivalent for war'. We have yet to appreciate this outstanding contribution of all times in a world that shakes with fear let it may destroy itself tomorrow.

Religion had descended to the depths of hypocrisy, meaningless ritualism and an institutionalism of vested interests. No one has done more to show the pioneer that

true religion is more than opiate—that an effective revolution must be based on religion or as Gandhiji put it, on 'a living faith in God.' I cannot but feel that the greatest contribution of this Pioneer of Life in the long run will be right here—in the field of a living creative religion for is not this the greatest need of the world to-day?

## BASIC RELIGION : A STUDY IN GANDHIJI'S RELIGION

S. K. GEORGE

AN EMINENT English theologian has recently written a book on what he calls *Basic Christianity*.<sup>1</sup> The author attempts to present the Religion of Jésus, shorn of its many accretions and the elaborate doctrines and ecclesiastical paraphernalia it has accumulated through the ages, as the most acceptable religion for the modern man all over the world. The analogy on which the author bases his theme is, as the title itself suggests, that of Basic English as the world-language. He examines the claims and the adaptability of the chief living religions of the world and comes, perhaps too glibly, to the conclusion that Christianity is the religion best calculated to win world acceptance. As in the plea for Basic English the author's predilections have no doubt influenced his choice and his arguments. Christianity, like English, has spread all over the world and, in its simplest and most intelligible form, as presented by the author, does stake a claim to be the world-religion. His main submission is that the Religion of Jesus is most clearly and completely enshrined in what has come to be known and revered all over the world as the Lord's Prayer. This accords with the judgment of such an earnest and well-equipped modern student of religion and psychology as Gerald Heard has expounded in his book: *The Creed of Christ*. "The more the prayer is studied, and the more it is compared with all the other means for defining and uniting Christian people, the more it seems clear that it is the one central and enduring postulate, the essential code, the real creed of Christianity. By this prayer we may and must judge all Christianity, whether it is the millennial record of the Church or our own acts and thoughts of the last half-

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<sup>1</sup> H. D. Major : *Basic Christianity* (Basil Blackell, Oxford).

hour'.<sup>1</sup> The cardinal place and value of this Christian *mantra*, which is among the best authenticated *ipsisima verba* of Jesus, is reflected in its liturgical and devotional use by all sections of the Christian Church and by all manner of Christians. The acceptance of this simple but profound prayer as the central creed of Christianity is a consummation devoutly to be wished for and will certainly place the Religion of Jesus in a fair way to win world-wide allegiance.

But the analogy and the argument may seem too trite to many who have glimpsed anything of the complexities of human language and the human make-up. No single language, and certainly not a skeleton language, which alone is Basic English even according to its protagonists, can serve as the vehicle of expression of man's manifold needs and aspirations. Much less can an elemental religion, as expressed in a short prayer however profound, devoid of form and colour and ritual, satisfy the varied demands of the complex human personality. A basic religion, as well as a basic language, must have its roots in more than a single source, must be fed by streams that issue from the depths of human experience and must be sustained by that basic substratum of Reality that has found expression in the varieties of human speech and experience. It can only result from, in the words of Prof. Radhakrishnan, 'an understanding insight, full trust in the basic Reality which feeds all faiths and its power to lead us to the Truth. It believes in the deeper religion of the Spirit, which will be adequate for all people, vital enough to strike deep roots, powerful to unify each individual in himself and bind us all together by the realization of our common condition and our common goal'.<sup>2</sup>

The analogy, nevertheless, is helpful and suggestive. It draws attention to the need there is, and the possibility, of a common faith which can form the basis or the growing

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<sup>1</sup> G. Heard : *The Creed of Christ*, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Radhakrishnan in a speech at a World Conference of Faiths.

point of the diversities of the modern man's faith and practice, of an underlying unity in fundamentals, the realization of which seems almost the condition of human survival in a world which has become physically one. In the achievement of this common faith Gandhiji, though not a philosopher or a theologian, has given a clearer lead than any one else. Living intensely in the presence of naked Reality, stripping himself mentally as well as physically of all obstructing wrappings, he was able to sense basic truths more than most others in the modern world. His contribution to religion is as vitally revolutionary as that to Indian education ; and no epithet describes either more correctly than the word *Basic*.

Gandhiji's religion is basic in three aspects. First, in the breadth and depth of its definition of Ultimate Reality as Truth. Second, in its insistence that religion is all-pervasive and not a compartmental concern. And third, in its unreserved acceptance of the validity of all religions.

Nothing is more fundamental and nothing has been more fruitful of contention than the conception of God in religion. So cardinal is that in religious belief that to most people religion means belief in and worship of God, in spite of religious systems like Buddhism which discard the idea of God. God has been argued in and out of existence by thinkers from the beginning of time ; and He has been blindly believed in and propitiated by the masses ever since man became a conscious being. Varying concepts of God, as personal or impersonal, as one or many, as having attributes or none, as with or without form, have been the bones of contention and the distinguishing marks between the different religions. Without denying the validity of any of these, crude though many of them may seem to professedly enlightened minds, Gandhiji arrived at a basic idea that undergirds them all and sets free the springs of revolutionary advance in every one of them. No metaphysical or systematic thinker himself, he struck at an idea that can be and is at the basis of all religious quest and

progress. And this is the conclusion in which his mind came to rest after a continuous and relentless search for nearly fifty years, the idea that *Truth is God*. He draws attention to the fine distinction between this and an earlier conclusion of his that God is Truth and explains that the final statement excludes none, not even the atheists, for many of them have been more passionate votaries of Truth than most theists.<sup>1</sup> This claim of his to have reached bed-rock in his search after Reality is admitted by even Pandit Nehru, who though perplexed by, and impatient of, the conflicts and contentions of religious peoples and systems, admits himself to be a humble camp-follower of the grand army of the religious soul, if religion is the disinterested search after Truth that Gandhiji affirmed it to be and illustrated in a heroic life of experimenting with Truth.<sup>2</sup>

The second basic principle of Gandhiji's religion, also illustrated in life-long practice, is that religion is an all-pervasive influence and not an affair of temples or of sacred days or rites. This again is an idea inherent in every religion, for which religion has not claimed to lay down the law for the whole of life, though almost all of them have succumbed to the spirit of other-worldliness, offering an ark of refuge for frightened man or pointing to an unearthly triumph, when defeated in the struggle, to mould the world according to their patterns? But Gandhiji refused to accept that way of escape and insisted on religion maintaining itself in the world, transforming and revolutionizing it. Like Gurudev Tagore, he had no use for a God worshipped in a temple with the doors all shut. He dared to assert that there is no God in temples to which the lowliest and the least of His creatures are not admitted and consistently refused to enter temples not open to the outcastes. Like Gurudev, he too saw his God bound with all His creation and met Him in the toil and the sweat of the world's dirtiest occupation. Politics was to him an indispensable

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<sup>1</sup> See N. K. Bose : *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Nehru : *Autobiography*, p. 380.

part of religion ; nay his religion was his politics as well as his economics. Did he not say that to a hungry man God must appear in the form of bread? Khadi and Swadeshism, Indian independence and the removal of untouchability, were all to him articles of religious belief, not mere programmes in a political campaign. 'Most religious people', he said, 'are politicians in disguise, while I am a religious man in the guise of a politician'. Basic religion, the religion the modern world needs, no matter what forms it expresses itself in and in what traditions it is rooted, must be one that will realize justice and peace on earth and realize them through the ways of love and truth. Gandhiji was the prophet, the leader of that kind of religion, a leader who has crowned a life-long testimony to its power and practicability by a heroic death that has compelled the attention of the world.

Thirdly, he has been the leader of a Basic Religion that can be the Common Faith of the world. A United World, made One by the discoveries of Science and the compulsions of Economics, struggling on pain of extinction to be politically one, demands a World Religion. Yet that religion cannot be an artificially manufactured uniform code of practice and belief for all mankind. It will have to provide expression for varieties of faith and experience and satisfy individuals and groups of different temperaments, traditions and levels of attainment. Its unity will be one of spiritual consent, rather than of intellectual assent or ritual uniformity. It will be born of the belief in the One Ultimate Reality underlying and satisfying at various levels human search and aspiration in all countries and all ages. It will grant the validity and the necessity of the diverse systems that have arisen out of man's limited, but growing and ever-broadening, response to the Divine Initiative from the dawn of creation. Gandhiji, a Hindu to the last, bore witness to the need of this diversity and yet the essential oneness and underlying unity of it all. He laid himself open to criticism from the beginning to the end of his

public career by sticking to his favourite form of worship, the worship of God as revealed in Rama. This worship of God under a particular form is a limitation, perhaps a necessary limitation, to one trained from childhood in that way. Said a wise spiritual director to a novice who objected to the account of a vision in which an angel had appeared in a particular human form to a believer: But he would have had to assume *some* form to be visible to mortal eyes. God will continue to be worshipped under various forms so long as the majority of men and women are at the stage that we know them to be. Gandhiji grasped the nettle of that difficulty by himself using in largely Hindu audiences the prayers that he himself was accustomed to and had drawn sustenance from. He was thereby conceding and establishing the right of every group of believers to worship in its own traditional manner. Only he emphasised in his addresses and showed in his practice that every form was valid and that, as an oft-repeated line of his favourite *Ramdhun* puts it, Isvara and Allah are but different names of the One God. This doctrine of what he called the *Equality of Religions*<sup>1</sup> has caused grave misgivings to militant faiths like Christianity and Islam, which claim each to be the sole vehicle of God's saving truth. But a Christianity or an Islam that has to become really Indian must face this question and settle the issue either of war or of peace in the religious realm. Gandhiji more than any other leader of Indian religious thought has faced Christianity and other militant religions with this choice and also shown the way of peace and of true religion in the building up of a united world on the basis of a Common Faith, unreservedly accepting the fact of variety in man's apprehensions of, and responses to, a Basic Reality that, in its totality, is infinitely beyond the measures of the human mind.

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<sup>1</sup> See Gandhi: *From Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 38-44.



## NON-VIOLENCE AND THE MODERN WORLD : GANDHIJI'S MISSION OF RECONCILIATION

ETHEL MANNIN

IT MIGHT well be that if Gandhiji could know all that is written of him by his admirers and followers in this Memorial Number—and perhaps he does know—he would protest, sadly, ‘I was not really like that. There were inconsistencies in my conduct and in my utterances, so much so that that impassioned apostle of non-violence, my friend Bart de Ligt, was more than once driven to pained protest. Do not lose sight of my human weakness or you will lose the truth about me.’

My reason for thinking that such might be his reaction was because in 1925 he wrote in *Young India*, ‘When I think of my littleness and my limitations on the one hand and of the expectations raised about me on the other, I become dazed for the moment, but I come to myself as soon as I realise that these expectations are a tribute not to me, a curious mixture of Jekyll and Hyde, but to the incarnation, however imperfect, but comparatively great, in me of the two priceless qualities of truth and non-violence.’

We render no service to the ideals and principles for which Gandhiji stood if we all but deify him, as the Germans all but deified their Fuhrer under the Nazi regime, and as to-day, it would seem, the Russian masses all but deify Stálin. By doing so we fall away from Truth, and Truth was for Gandhiji ‘the most important name of God,’ and ‘the only correct and fully significant name for God.’ Jesus as the Son of God is remote from us, but the Jesus who cried out in agony on the cross, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ cried out as a man; then his sacrifice, his nobility, his *love* become real to us. When we read that he wept when looking down upon Jerusalem from a hill-top, and when we read of his anger when he found

the money-lenders in the temple, then we are aware of human weakness; then he becomes dear and personal to us—and we realize his true stature; a sense of proportion is invoked, by which we are able, out of the littleness of our own humanity, to measure his greatness. Thus it is with Gandhiji. It is only as we keep sight of 'the curious mixture of Jekyll and Hyde' in his personality that we realize how great a man dwelled among us, and our veneration has meaning. We saw how much lush adulation was poured out after his assassination from people who during his lifetime insulted and derided him and made no effort to understand his principles; even the man who had once contemptuously referred to him as 'the naked fakir' paid his tribute. We cannot know how much of all that tribute from those who in his life had opposed him or even scorned him was sincere. It could be that at the end conscience roused a sense of shame in some of them for past injustice, and that some of the light of his great spirit entered in. It very well could be; yet we who believe we understand a little of all he stood for, not merely do not lose by acknowledging his weaknesses, but actually gain, for then we are possessed of a yardstick by which to measure his greatness—not a least part of which was his own humble awareness of his limitations. In his reply, in 1928, to the open letter to him by Bart de Ligt, in the French paper, *Evolution*, he wrote, 'I know I fail often, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. . . . I am painfully aware of my failings. But the Light within me is steady and clear'.

And that light within him was his profound, his fundamental, belief that 'there is no escape for any of us save through truth and non-violence'.

Those words are given a new poignance, a new significance, in 1948, launched as we so tragically are into the atomic era. The pronouncement now has a prophetic quality. The world's refusal to accept non-violence not merely as a philosophical principle, but as Gandhiji accepted it, in his own words, as 'the rule and breath' of life, has

plunged us into two world wars in one lifetime, and from the second disaster the world is physically and spiritually sick almost unto death—so spiritually sick that even before it has begun to rebuild its ruined cities and its broken economies, before even the last prisoner-of-war has been sent home, the last air-raid shelter demolished, it can contemplate yet another war, in the full awareness that if it comes it will mean the destruction, and in the most horrible fashion, not only of cities and nations, but of a whole civilization. The very earth, God's kind and good green earth, will have become sterile, so that those who survive the heat and the blast, and who do not die later from unspeakable dreadful after-effects, may be expected to die from famine. The atomic bomb is the apex of violence, and as such it has, paradoxically, made recourse to violence unthinkable—for all but criminal lunatics—since its use means to all intents and purposes the extinction of all concerned. That human beings nevertheless do still think in terms of war as a means of solving the world-problem of the balance of power between conflicting political ideologies, in the full knowledge that another war means the use of atomic bombs far more terrible in their devastating power than those dropped on Japan only three years ago, is an indication of the spirit of evil loosed into the world by the last monstrous orgy of violence.

We have seen this spirit of evil released even in India, and it was the expression of this spirit which ended Gandhiji's life. To that extent it can be said that Gandhiji's mission of reconciliation failed, and, indeed, those who believe in the use of violence lost no time in saying so. Equally it can be said that Jesus's mission of reconciliation of mankind with God has failed, since Jesus himself was crucified with common thieves, his followers persecuted, and those who profess his teaching to-day justify the most brutal slaughter of their fellow-men in the name of righteous wars, with complete disregard for his direct injunction that we should love our enemies, resist not evil, turn the other

cheek, and, in general, quite simply 'love one another.' Yet we know that in spite of all this Jesus crucified became, imperishably, the conscience of mankind; he cannot be said to have lived and died in vain when two thousand years later the conscience of millions is still touched by his name. His assertion, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life,' still holds; his Way is the way of peace, his Truth is the truth that God is Love, and Mankind lives only as it accepts this Law of Love—which Gandhiji also preached.

In 1939 Gandhiji told a Chinese pacifist who had worked with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, but who was worried by the apparent ineffectiveness of non-violent resistance to evil—in his case the evil of the Japanese military machine turned against his people—'Non-violence succeeds only when we have a living faith in God. Buddha, Jesus, Mahomed—they were all warriors of peace in their own style. We have to enrich the heritage left by these world teachers. God has His own wonderful way of executing His plans and choosing His instruments. . . . All the world teachers, you should know, began with a zero!' Although we have seen a number of the people who can be regarded as Gandhiji's own children taking recourse to violence in the final struggles between what we now define as 'India' and 'Pakistan', and although Gandhiji himself died at the hand of violence, we know that he was an instrument of God for the propagation of His Law of Love, and that Indian independence was peacefully achieved very largely through his profound spiritual influence over millions of people who despite the sporadic outbreaks of violence have never deviated from their adherence to the laws of *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha*; and that influence is a continuing power, though Gandhiji is no longer with us in the flesh.

The conscience of the world has been profoundly shocked twice in recent years—when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, and by the news of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. In England when at mid-day the horrifying news came through, on the radio, and in the early

editions of the evening papers, almost literally everyone was talking about it—housewives, office-girls, errand-boys, all manner of people who normally were not much interested in Gandhiji and his ideas and who knew very little about either him or them. It was all curiously personal, and just as after the news broke of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima there was this general sense of shock, of dismay, so now there was this feeling of the common conscience somehow involved. The world knew, without ever giving definite shape to the thought, that when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima one epoch had ended and a new and terrifying one begun; it was the inauguration of the atomic era; the world would never be the same again; we were all involved in a common guilt and a universal tragedy. Unexpressed in the collective mind was the despairing thought, *It is our turn next!* Hell had somehow quite literally been let loose. With the death of Gandhiji there was the unexpressed common sense of loss—of that much of the little remaining goodness taken from the world; we were all somehow the poorer; it was all somehow intensely personal. There was no whipped-up sentiment of press or radio; there was no time for that before the dismay was upon all of us; the reaction was immediate. A friend wrote to me from America, 'I thought a lot about Gandhi while he lived, though, like most people, I remained in ignorance of the greater part of his philosophy and work. But when I thought of him there was a radiance somewhere in the world. Now the cloud is over everything; the darkness is complete.' There was that sense of the forces of evil triumphing.

That is what at first it looked like and felt like. But that the common people everywhere could feel the tragedy so personally, be so shaken, is evidence that the darkness is not complete; in spite of all the ugliness and brutality and stupidity and hopelessness in the world to-day there is still the recognition of goodness, and we are recalled to what the Quakers define as 'that of God in every man', and St. Augustine of Hippo's faith that 'we need despair of no man

so long as he lives.' So long as human beings are still capable of recognizing the face of goodness when it is presented to them they may still be reconciled to God—that is to say to Truth. There is then still hope for suffering, struggling, tormented humanity, despite the chaos and darkness and despair in which the people are everywhere engulfed. It is as though they were all at the bottom of a deep well, yet still capable of looking up and seeing the light. That ability to go on recognizing the light from the bottom of the well is in essence Man's reconciliation with God. Therein lies our salvation. As Gandhiji wrote at the end of 1939, 'The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands. Nothing can happen but by His will expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He. We neither know Him nor his Law save through the glass darkly. But the faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope, and faith in the future.'

*Faith in the future!* So necessary, and yet everywhere in the world to-day so lacking, because everywhere human beings are fearful of this third world war, this ultimate disaster, to which they are yet so tragically resigned. There is everywhere this sense of the inevitability of disaster, and so great is the despair in Germany that, particularly among the young people, there is the attitude that since war is anyhow inevitable the sooner it comes the better, for, they say, conditions cannot be worse, and if war comes they may be better, since, they add bitterly, it is possible to organize in war. They feel, in the material and physical bitterness of their defeat at the hands of superior force, that they have nothing to lose. In England, without the bitterness of the defeated, there is the same hopelessness, the same sense of insecurity, the same lack of any faith in the future, the same despairing acceptance of another war, and that quite soon, as inevitable. Morale sinks lower and lower under the impact of this hopelessness—nothing much matters, enjoy yourselves whilst you can, its not worth making an effort in any direction. Mr. Attlee recently had the good

sense to declare that war is not inevitable ; some months before that the Duke of Edinburgh said the same thing in a balanced and sensible speech which might well have given more emphatic publicity. What we need, of course, is for our Government to come out on the side of complete disarmament and declare unequivocally that in no circumstance will it resort to the arbitrament of war. As Gandhiji was always pointing out, such a policy on the part of any government at any time takes a great deal of courage. '*Ahimsa* is not the way of the timid or cowardly. It is the way of the brave ready to face death. He who perishes sword in hand is no doubt brave, but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching is braver.' And again, 'It would be found that before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. . . . It may be used that this again is an ideal state. And so it is. The propositions from which I have drawn my arguments are as true as Euclid's definitions, which are none the less true because in practice we are unable even to draw Euclid's line on a blackboard. But even a geometrician finds it impossible to get on without bearing in mind Euclid's definitions.'

That was written in 1925. The implications of not disarming are vastly more horrifying and disastrous now than they were then. Now we either accept the Law of Love, or perish. Now we either learn to love our neighbour, or die with him. The choice now is between *Ahimsa* or extermination—the dread word with which our press described what had happened to Nagasaki, *obliteration*.

I have heard many people assert, both here and in Germany, that they would prefer death to living under Russian domination. Certainly to people who have a feeling for freedom Stalinism (which should never be confused with the true communism—of all things in common—of the early Christians) is as great an evil as Nazism, and for pre-

cisely the same reasons, but the simple fact remains that no government, however evil, can ever be so disastrous an evil as the war which seeks to destroy it. There is a curious illusion current that if a sufficient show of force is mustered the potential enemy is intimidated; but it is a game of bluff at which both sides can, and do, play—with the result that the world is becoming a steadily mounting armaments dump. And the logical conclusion of preparation for atomic war is atomic annihilation. Truly the world must take to its tormented heart now the truth which Gandhiji enunciated twenty years ago, and recognize that either we learn to live by the law of love, and all that that connotes of non-violence, personally and collectively, and in thought as well as in conduct, or we perish from the face of the earth; there is, as Gandhiji said, *no escape other than through truth and non-violence*. In 1938 Gandhiji prophesied that 'If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as never occurred in history.' Ten years later we who have lived through the slaughter know that he was right, and right too in his declaration that victory for any nation would be a 'living death'. With the destruction of the Nazi regime something evil was destroyed, but the evil spirit of totalitarianism was not merely not destroyed but strengthened; it marches upon the world now under a different banner, that is all. A spirit of gangsterism is rampant in the world as never before, and there is everywhere a disillusionment and lack of faith in the future which breeds moral decadence and corruption.

The world needs the moral example of Gandhiji, his powerful *soul-force*, more desperately to-day than ever. It is impossible not to feel that despite his long ministry he was cut off from us before his work was finished; yet he was with us long enough to demonstrate—through two great campaigns of non-violent resistance to evil in India—the power of soul-force as opposed to physical force. He has shown us the way of truth, which is the way of love;

being mortal it was not within his power to give us the grace to follow the way ; that can only come from within ourselves ; we have first to become reconciled with Truth ; that is to say with God. Before that miracle can be wrought within us, as individuals and as nations, there must first develop within us the *desire* for that reconciliation.

Reconciliation has many meaning, yet the same truth runs through them all. Reconciliation is reunion after estrangement ; it is resignation, submission, acceptance ; it is a harmonising of conflicting ideas or actions ; it is, we might say, a coming-to-terms with life. The truth which runs through all this is peace, physical and spiritual. St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo in the fourth century, writing in times no less chaotic than our own, cried to God 'Thou madest us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.' It is the whole essence of Gandhiji's mission of reconciliation. He has, indeed, expressed himself on the subject of religion in much the same terms ; it was, he declared, 'the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.'

Until Mankind achieves that correspondence with its Maker, that reconciliation with Truth, the world will continue to live in agony, in the perpetual fear of war, and all the moral and spiritual disintegration that that involves. We can be physically safe and spiritually free only as we achieve *Ahimsa*, which, as Gandhiji has said, is only possible by ceaseless striving. I cannot do better than conclude with his own words, addressed to India in 1926 but carrying no less urgent a message for the world in general to-day: 'Let those, therefore, who believe in non-violence as the only method of achieving real freedom, keep the lamp of non-violence burning bright in the midst of the present impenetrable gloom. The truth of a few will count ; the

untruth of millions will vanish even like chaff before a whiff of wind.'

## SATYAGRAHA AND ITS ORIGIN IN SOUTH AFRICA

H. S. L. POLAK

AS GENERAL SMUTS reminded us, in his contribution to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's 70th anniversary volume of tributes to Gandhiji, in 1939, the Mahatma's technique of Satyagraha—or, as it was at first known, Passive Resistance—had its origin in South Africa. It was not, however, until 1906, or twelve years after his arrival there, that the flame of Satyagraha began to glow. Until then, the Indian grievances had been dealt with in the usual orthodox ways of petitions, memoranda, addresses, questions in Parliament, public speeches, and so on. But the time had now arrived when, all these having proved fruitless, new and radical methods had to be devised, their consequences considered, and redress thereby, at whatever cost to those suffering under new social, economic, and political disabilities that must no longer be tolerated, determined upon.

That wars let loose events never contemplated in times of peace is a commonplace. It was as true of the Boer War as of the last World War, though on a smaller scale. The bitter conflict which ended with the Treaty of Vereeniging had stirred emotions that must find an outlet—either that of enduring hostility and revolutionary unrest between the two contending white peoples, or that of friendly relations and the building up of mutual confidence. It was to promote the latter rather than permit the former that led the British Government, when the new Crown Colony Administration of the Transvaal was set up in 1902, to refrain from repealing the anti-Indian legislation of the South African Republic, notwithstanding that British official spokesmen, in 1899, had declared that this form of racial intolerance was one of the direct causes of the Boer War. Racial discrimination against non-whites had been a fundamental,

from the earliest days of the Republic, which could not be ignored.

But it was some time before the defeated Boer leaders could be persuaded that Britain was in earnest in desiring to extend democratic self-government at an early date. Apparently, the main basis upon which the British-Boer edifice could be built was the recognition that the non-whites were to be excluded from the franchise and from such major citizenship rights as those of trade, residence, and land-ownership otherwise than in segregated areas. Of the non-whites, the most intelligent and prosperous, and the best organized, were the Indians, mostly Muslim traders from Western India, and already largely influenced by the Indian national movement. The status of the Indian community, from its beginnings in the Transvaal, had been degraded by the fact that the much larger Indian population of the neighbouring Colony of Natal had derived from indentured labour immigration. It was a matter of 'herren-volk', on the one hand, and of 'coolies', on the other.

This was the situation facing Gandhi, on his recall to South Africa, after the Boer War, in which he had served as the leader of a volunteer Indian ambulance corps. He realized at once that the centre of gravity of Indian affairs had passed for the time being from Natal to the Transvaal. If the widespread denial of rights in the new Colony were not to spread to Natal, where most of the South African Indians were confined because of the immigration laws of the other three Colonies, immediate steps must be taken to stem the flow of racial legislation and of administrative restrictions then threatening.

The newly-formed Asiatic Department was unfriendly from the first. It sought not only to prevent fresh immigration, but to exclude the entry even of pre-War residents. As a conciliatory measure, and upon the highest official assurance that this would be a final requirement, the Indian leaders, on Gandhi's advice, agreed to the *administrative* restriction of immigration to such residents and that the £3

residential receipts issued by the Boer Government should be voluntarily surrendered and be replaced by certificates identifying the rightful holders. A census taken in 1904 showed that, as against the admitted pre-War figure of some 15,000, the Indian population had been reduced to 10,000. Possibilities of better economic conditions had drawn some of those formerly living in outlying areas to the new prosperous city of Johannesburg. But they were compelled to reside in an overcrowded 'location' grossly neglected by the Municipality. When, presently, an outbreak of plague occurred there, due to that neglect, and the location was destroyed by fire after the removal of its Indian inhabitants, many of these again sought refuge in outlying towns and villages.

This created the impression, deliberately fostered by the anti-Indian European leaders (anxious to get rid of trade rivals), and by some of the officials of the Asiatic Department seeking to divert attention from their own defects and malpractices, that widespread illicit Indian immigration had taken place, in which the Indian leaders had connived. At about the same time, the Transvaal gold-mines and the Orange Free State Railways were in great need of skilled labour and sought—as had happened 45 years earlier with the estate-owners of Natal—to secure indentured labour from India, whose Government, under Lord Curzon, would not consent because of the refusal to remove Indian disabilities in those Colonies.

Immediately upon his return from participation, as Sergeant-Major in charge of an Indian volunteer stretcher-bearer unit, in the Natal Native Rebellion Campaign of 1906, Gandhi found himself and his people in the Transvaal threatened with a draft Ordinance, introduced under this pressure, requiring all Indians (including at first, even women) to surrender their registration certificates, in breach of the official pledges only three years earlier, and to apply for fresh registration, with details of identification which included the giving of a complete set of finger-impressions.

The Indian community, facing this new crisis, at a public meeting held in Johannesburg took an oath, upon Gandhi's advice, after previous consultation with the leaders, not to apply for registration, but to take the consequences, whether of ruin or imprisonment. A protest and warning were lodged with the Government, on the grounds that (a) the new law, if passed, would add to the anti-Indian legislation already on the Statute Book ; (b) it would be a breach of an official undertaking that the existing registration documents would be final ; (c) it would be based upon unsupported allegations of fraud on the part of the community and its leaders ; (d) it would be based upon the assumption of large illicit immigration which the census figures had disproved ; (e) the compulsory giving of finger-impressions was required only of convicted criminals ; (f) acceptance of the new measure would eventually involve Indians in other parts of South Africa in the denial and restriction of their rights ; and (g) it would be a humiliation to the Motherland which could not be tolerated.

But Gandhi's method was always that of conciliation and negotiation where possible. The Colonial Administration, however, refused to negotiate with the Indian community and pressed the measure through the Legislature. As it could not come into operation without the Royal Assent, Gandhi, as leader of a small deputation, was sent to England to prevent this, and eventually succeeded, largely with the help of prominent retired officials from India and Lord Ampthill, former Governor of Madras and acting Viceroy.

In the meanwhile, steps had been taken, by agreement between the British and Boer leaders, to establish responsible government in the Transvaal, and it became operative in 1907. The first Bill of importance, rushed through all its stages in the newly-elected Legislative Council by the Government of General Botha, in which General Smuts held the portfolio of Asiatic affair, was the very measure which had already been rejected upon the advice of the Colonial Office. Now, however, in spite of Indian protests,

it was found impossible, since no protective reservations had been embodied in the Transvaal constitution, to interfere with a Colony enjoying self-government, and the Bill became law. Accordingly, the oath taken by the Indian community came into operation, after due notice to the Government. Thus was born the Satyagraha movement, which continued for the next seven years, with occasional suspension.

In his contribution above referred to, General Smuts, in self-defence, says: 'I must frankly confess that his (Gandhi's) activities at that time were very trying to me. Together with other South African leaders I was then busily engaged on the task of welding the old colonies into a unified State, of consolidating the administration of the new national structure, and of creating out of what was left after the Boer War, a new nation. It was a colossal work which took up every moment of my time. Suddenly, in the midst of all these engrossing preoccupations, Gandhi raised a most troublesome issue.' But that does not exonerate the distinguished South African statesman for the several times when he failed to fulfil his and his Government's formal pledges to Gandhi and the Indian community, when politics triumphed over statesmanship.

It is of interest here to note that Gandhi's second visit to England during the Satyagraha campaign took place at the time when Generals Botha and Smuts were there to conduct the negotiations with the British Government which resulted in the acceptance of the Union constitution by the British Parliament. Writing later of its true character, he expressly recognized the independent character of Dominion status, as evidenced by the position of South Africa under its new constitution. 'South Africa obtained full self-government. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that South Africa is completely independent. The British Empire cannot receive a single farthing from South Africa without the consent of its Government. Not only that, but British ministers concede that if South Africa wishes to

remove the Union Jack and to be independent even in name, there is nothing to prevent it from doing so.'

There is hardly any manifestation of the technique developed in later years that did not have its first expression in that long-drawn-out campaign. For Gandhi, Satyagraha meant something active and dynamic. It was the *power* of Truth that must prevail. Personal suffering on the part of Satyagrahis, endured in a spirit of non-violence and even of positive love, involving, it may be, the martyrdom of individuals, must in the end appeal to the better conscience of the opponent and result in the removal of the disability.

In the course of his experience during those plastic years, Gandhi came to realize that he must renounce his legal practice, partly because of his unwillingness to earn a livelihood from a profession which resorted to force to maintain the decrees of the Courts; partly because he had already, under the influence of Ruskin's 'Unto This Last', adopted the 'simple life' of the farmer and the craftsman; partly in order to devote himself entirely to the service of his people. At the same time, he renounced the family-life and adopted *brahmacharya*. Four times a prisoner sentenced to hard labour, he wore the non-white convict's headgear, which later became known as the 'Gandhi Cap'. He was already, largely in consequence of Tolstoy's writings on 'Non-Violence', a votary of *ahimsa* as the weapon of the strong. He was encouraged in his view that imprisonment of the body left the spirit free by Thorau's argument on the duty of 'Civil Disobedience', where a question of the citizen's conscience was involved.

Already convinced of the common basic truths of all the great religions by the teachings of Theosophy and discussions with Theosophical and other friends, he had no difficulty in persuading his countrymen, of all communities, high and low alike, to join in the great sacrifice for the Motherland. His observation that, of whatever status (including Gokhale himself during his visit in 1912), Indians were generally regarded and segregated as 'un-

touchables', together with his own practice of sanitation and nursing the sick, gave him a deep understanding of the qualities, the needs, and the sufferings of the 'depressed classes'. His work as a farmer and his contact with the indentured labourers drew his sympathy for the peasant and his love of the village life, so that, at the end of his South African career, he was already dressed as a peasant. His knowledge of its disastrous economic consequences to the ex-indentured labourers resulted in his advocacy of the repeal of the £3 tax upon them and their children as the price of 'free' residence in Natal, and, when the Botha Government's pledge thereof to Gokhale was flagrantly violated, in his making the repeal part of the Satyagraha objective, his urging the Indian coal-miners to strike in protest, and his leading the great march of thousands into the Transvaal (forerunner of the Dandi march) in order to court arrest *en masse*. His realization of the evils of the indenture system led to his initiative in getting it prohibited, through Gokhale's activity, at first for Natal, and later, on his own return to India, throughout the Empire.

The public burning of foreign cloth was anticipated by the burning of the voluntary registration certificates after Smuts's repudiation of his pledge to repeal the Black Act of 1907. It was in South Africa that he refused, even under pressure by his colleagues, to extend the Satyagraha campaign to include previous disabilities, in order to restrict its scope to the particular objective and thus secure the removal of the special grievance with the minimum of suffering and sacrifice. Except where the masses were directly concerned, as in the case of the £3 tax, and they could be assured of effective and disciplined leadership, he refused to countenance mass agitation, limiting the activity to the individual Satyagraha of chosen followers and well-trying associates.

It was in South Africa, too, that he refused to be persuaded to launch a new campaign at a time when the opponent was embarrassed by other critical commitments,

as when, having announced the resumption of the march and the revival of the struggle to take place on January 1, 1914, in protest against the Union Government's refusal to repeal the £3 tax as promised, he held up the march when the Government became involved in a wide-spread railwaymen's strike. The effect of this on the mind of General Smuts was to open the way to direct negotiations between the two men, the resultant settlement of the seven years' old struggle, and Gandhi's final departure for India. The General's attitude was reflected in his secretary's statement, when negotiations were resumed: 'I do not like your people, and do not care to assist them at all. But what am I to do? You help us in our days of need. How can we lay hands upon you? I often wish you took to violence like the English strikers, and then we would know at once how to dispose of you. But you will not injure even the enemy. You desire victory through self-suffering alone and never transgress your self-imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is what reduces us to sheer helplessness.'

Gandhi's famous fasts had their origin in his first fast, in South Africa, for self-purification and by way of penance for the sins of others. Even his renunciation of cow's milk took place there in order to free himself from the lower passions. Renunciation, abstinence, continence, self-sacrifice—all derived from an urgent desire to practise the essential doctrines of the *Bhagavad Gita*—had their stimulus during the formative years of the Satyagraha campaign in South Africa. Even the murderous attack upon him that resulted fatally on January 30 last—the very day of his first interview with Smuts, in 1908—was anticipated forty years earlier by a similar assault in Johannesburg by some misguided countrymen who had misunderstood his motive and action in setting an example to the Satyagrahis by applying for voluntary re-registration with the giving of finger-prints without legal compulsion, after General Smuts had undertaken to repeal the Act of

1907. All of these experiences helped to crystallize the character of the man who was to become the Father of Indian freedom and the greatest of his age.

Nor was it South Africa alone whose status towards complete independence grew during these creative years. When Lord Curzon, in refusing to permit an extension of the indenture system to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, in response to unanimous Indian opinion, he struck a new line of independent action by the Government of India. So eight years later Lord Hardinge, in his historic Madras speech, became the spokesman of Indian sentiment at another great crisis in the South African situation, when unprecedentedly, he openly denounced the policy and methods of the Union Government and announced his 'deep and burning' sympathy with the suffering Satyagrahis, whose action he wholeheartedly defended and whose civil disobedience of unjust and invidious legislation he supported. It was at a moment when thousands of indentured and ex-indentured labourers in the Natal coalmines and sugar estates had become prisoners there, under constant threat of violence to compel them to end the strike against the £3 tax and return to work ; and when a number of Indian women, including Mrs. Gandhi, had gone to jail in protest against the refusal of the Union Government to amend the law which had been interpreted by the Chief Justice of one of the Provincial High Courts as denying the legality of all except Indian Christian marriages, thus branding non-Christian Indian wives as concubines and their children as illegitimate. When the public in India learnt of all this, embitterment spread throughout the country, and it was a reflexion of this feeling that appeared in Lord Hardinge's demand for a Commission of Inquiry, which was shortly afterwards appointed.

When, with the help of Sir Benjamin Robertson, as official mediator on behalf of the Government of India, and of C. F. Andrews, as unofficial mediator between Gandhi

and Smuts, the struggle was brought to an end by the passing of the Indians Relief Bill, in 1914, Viscount Gladstone, the Governor-General of the Union, announcing at a public meeting the Royal Assent to the measure, after signing the Act, pointed out that it indicated that a free, responsible South African Government was not inconsistent with the discharge of Imperial obligations. The Commission's report and recommendations, he said, had unified public opinion and enabled the Government to find a satisfactory solution. The new measure was not only an act of justice, but in the Imperial interest an urgent necessity. No true South African interest had been subordinated to Imperial considerations, but the Imperial responsibility was recognized.

## SATYAGRAHA AGAINST WAR

K. G. MASHRUWALA

'WHERE there is a will, there's a way'. If nations are really opposed to war, none can force them to do so. There are instances in history, where governments have been forced to make peace with an enemy, and at times even ignoble peace, when their subjects have become tired of war and forcefully demanded its end. There is also the instance of the Boer War of Transvaal, where the people of England are said to have almost compelled the British Government to come to terms with the Boers not so much on account of aversion to war as by the realization that their government had been fighting it without any moral justification and had, besides, in doing so perpetrated unspeakable atrocities against innocent people.

The credit for creating public opinion in England against the Boer War belongs, says Gandhiji in his *Satyagraha in South Africa* (pp. 31-32), not to the Boers themselves whose women were in the concentration camps and whose men were 'fighting valiantly on the battle-field', but to 'a few high souled Englishmen and women, who were then in South Africa'. Gandhiji mentions three persons in particular: Miss Emily Hobhouse, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. W. T. Stead. Miss Hobhouse boldly and frankly condemned the atrocities of the British army on the Boers. Speaking about her to a Chinese visitor, Gandhiji said,

Though an Englishwoman, she courageously went to the Boer concentration camps. She exhorted the Boers never to lose heart, and it is said that, if she had not steeled the hearts of the Boer women as she did, the war might have taken a different turn. She was full of wrath for her own people for whom she had not a good word to say . . . . . You will copy her love

for the 'enemy' that made her denounce the misdeeds of her own countrymen.<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the other two, he says,

The Late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman read the mind of the English nation, and raised his voice against the war. The late Mr. Stead publicly prayed and invited others to pray, that God might decree the English a defeat in the war. This was a wonderful sight. Real suffering borne melts even a heart of stone. Such is the potency of suffering, or *tapas*. And there lies the key to *Satyagraha*.<sup>2</sup>

The voice of these advocates of 'enemies', deriving its strength from the earnest regard for honour and justice became mightier than the sword of either the British or the Boers. It forced the British to sheathe their sword, which they would not have done out of mere fear of the Boer sword. Britain, with the enforced assistance of India, was strong enough to exterminate the Boers, if mere physical power was to decide their fate. But the British nation was deeply moved by the sufferings of the Boer women and the bravery of their men. So,

At last, King Edward wrote to Lord Kitchener, saying that he could not tolerate it, and that if it was the only means of reducing the Boers to submission, he would prefer any sort of peace to continuing the war in that fashion, and asking the General to bring the war to a speedy end.<sup>3</sup>

'The result was that the peace of Vereeniging was concluded.' It never gave Great Britain any cause for regret. South Africa became ever since a faithful ally of Great Britain such as she could never have become through subjugation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Harijan*, 28-1-1939, reproduced in *Non-violence in Peace and War*, p. 217, Navajivan Press.

<sup>2</sup> *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

## SATYAGRAHA AGAINST WAR

Two good and honest heads of families need never come to blows, even if individual members of their families have done something wrong. Also two families need never go to war against each other, if the members are good, honest, peace-loving and unyielding where principles are concerned, even if the heads and powerful members of the families are perverse, greedy and quarrelsome. There are not instances wanting of cases where the love, wisdom and self-sacrifice of a member on each or even one of the sides has succeeded in putting an end to quarrels going on for generations together.

Let us therefore realize that when two governments—or, for the matter of that, to speak nearer home, leaders of two communities like Hindus and Muslims or Jews and Arabs—declare hostilities, they do so on the conviction that either their respective people would stand with them and will willingly support them or could be compelled to fight for them. In the last World War the British Government declared war against Germany on the first conviction; the Indian Government did so on the second conviction. Hitler had perhaps both the convictions in part. If the people had been unwilling to fight and strong enough to declare their will, neither the Fuhrer nor His Britanic Majesty could have proceeded with the war. For a long number of years, war-mongers in both the countries had preached a cult of hatred in the same way as the leaders of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha had done in ours. Every Britisher who read newspapers (and almost all did so in Great Britain) was taught to hate the Germans, perhaps more strongly and successfully than Shriyuts Jinnah and Savarkar and the R.S.S. and the Akalis have been able to do in India. We know how wild and disastrous the propaganda of communal hatred has been in our country. The average Britisher's hatred for a German or of a German for a Britisher was (and perhaps to this day is) still stronger. Shortly after the end of the first World War, I knew an English woman who could

not bear the sight of a German woman even as common guests and admirers of Gandhiji at the Sabarmati Asram.



Enmity between two individuals generally develops out of personal unhappy relations. But enmity between people of different communities or nations has very little of personal unhappy experiences of the others before an actual fight begins. Not one out of a thousand Hindus would be able to say that he ever had an unhappy experience with the Muslims or vice versa. Perhaps a hundred out of a thousand would be able to say that personally they had some good friends in the other community. So also between Britishers, Germans and Russians, Jews and Arabs. And yet by reason of perverse propaganda generally originating from a handful of designing and ambitious or fanatic individuals, a whole nation or community is trained to bitterly hate another with such heat, that ultimately a little accidental conclusion becomes sufficient to create a conflagration.

If we carefully investigate into the original cause of every war, I believe that in most of them we shall find out ultimately that the seed was sown for it by a few very ambitious, powerful and evil-minded individuals on one or both the sides. The evil did not originate in the masses, but it spread among them. They were forcibly made or unconsciously led to quarrel. They also became its first and principal victims, the main wirepullers often escaping unhurt until their side was absolutely defeated. Often they remained unhurt even after it.

But the general belief is that it is difficult to put an end to war because, it is alleged, violence is more inherent in and natural to man than non-violence, and while the votaries of violence could be counted by thousands, those of non-violence could be counted on one's fingers.

Of course, non-violence is an ascent, while violence is the opposite. Therefore, it is easier to throw a people into

violence than to take them out of it. But it is necessary for the believer in non-violence to realize that even violence ultimately represents the intrinsic effort of a few individuals only. And if similar intense effort is made by the votary of non-violence, though an uphill task and more difficult than the other one, there is no reason why one should despair of success in weaning away a people from the path of violence. Indeed, given the same energy and earnestness, the devotee of non-violence has certain advantages over the propagandist of violence. For, violence has to depend upon outside material resources and a complicated organization, while non-violence little depends upon all these. It rests upon its spirit of love and service and non-infliction—even self-immolation. It does not feel helpless for want of a shield or a sword, or a fortress to hide into, or a following. It takes death and injury and loss of property as nature has designed them, i.e. inevitable events and accidents of life in any case, and therefore, it does not care to escape from them anyhow—at least not by resorting to any act inconsistent with non-violence and self-respect. With firm faith in the doctrine of truth and love its votary should act upto it and preach it. People must be led out of hate and war-mindedness with the same zeal and energy as that with which Hitler or Churchill did to prosecute the war.



The ideal of conquering hatred by non-hatred and adhering to non-violence against wanton aggression, even to the extent of voluntarily falling into the hands of an enemy notorious for his brutality, is not altogether new in Indian ideology. Jain and Buddhist literatures narrate stories of princes sticking to perfect non-violence against rival kings. Probably, these are imaginary rather than historical stories, and show no more than that such ideal has been conceived in India for nearly two thousand years last.

But I do not know whether there ever was a demonstration in history of this ideal. It will be therefore safer to say that it has not yet been possible for mankind to show a perfect example of this. The reason must be sought in the weakness of the votaries of non-violence than in the doctrine. Our non-violence has not grown yet to the required intensity, our spirits are still undeveloped and unchaste, our love is still superficial, a mere rationalization that has not yet gone to the heart, our readiness to forgive is still a doubtful virtue, and, the last but perhaps not the least, we lack the urge and energy to do something positive in witness of our faith. It is these personal drawbacks that make us feel nervous against odds. We seek to find substitutes for our spiritual weakness in numbers.

This is not to suggest that where a change is to be brought about in the faith, act or policy of a whole society, there is no need for co-workers and the ultimate response by the people. But the point is that the satyagrahi does not wait for or need others for declaring his faith or acting up to it. He does it even at the risk of his life, not to mention derision or disregard. And if he is disregarded or derided he does not find fault with other leaders or parties, or with his colleagues or the people at large, but in his own insufficient *tapas*.

The problem of meeting war or violent aggression by and against whether individuals, or communities, or nations, or states is essentially one. The principles which will apply in one case will apply in others. The last acts of Gandhiji's life were dedicated to meeting by non-violence violence between communities. In Noakhali (East Bengal) he worked for rescuing and strengthening Hindus against Muslims. In Bihar, Calcutta, Delhi and East Punjab he was engaged in giving protection to the Muslims against angry and revengeful Hindus and Sikhs.

There is a story in the History of England that the countries of King Canute flattered him as the Lord of the Seas. He asked them whether the sea would obey his

orders. They said that they would. He asked the waves of the rising tide to stop at the limit where they had then reached. They did not obey. And the King rebuked the courtiers for indulging in untruthful flattery.

In the *Ramayan* there is the story of Rama desiring to cross the sea in order to reach Lanka. Tulsidas says that Rama fasted for three days and prayed to the sea-god for giving him the way. The sea did not relent and Lakshmana, with more faith in his arrows than in fasts, advised to fight the sea with his *astras* (weapons). As Rama was about to accept the advice, the sea-god appeared before him and showed him a simpler way than throwing weapons, viz. building a bridge. Rama accepted the advice and instead of war between the sea and him, there was friendship.

The tide of communal frenzy was more violent and stronger than the rising tide of the sea, which Canute ordered to hold back, or the depth of the sea, which Rama wanted to cross over. It was a living tide. Strong, violently minded, relentless, cruel and unscrupulous organizations had been for a long time busily engaged in pressing it up into a tempest of unprecedented intensity. They had already succeeded in massacring thousands on both sides, and in putting some millions into indescribable hardships. The biggest exodus that the world had ever witnessed had no effect on these protagonists of Islamic Raj, Hindu Raj and Sikh Raj. Their thirst for blood was still strong. Even some members and staff of the two governments and rulers were not, to put it mildly, quite clear in their minds about the policy to be adopted against minorities living in their States and in their attitude towards communalist propaganda. Deliberately or foolishly not a few of them gave encouragement to the R.S.S. in the Indian Union and to the Muslim Guards in Pakistan. Barring a few personal assistants, Gandhiji was for a time severely alone in his task of fighting communalism. Nothing daunted, he determined to 'Do or Die' even if he were single-handed.

Twice he turned the tide of a possible genocide by undertaking fasts unto death. His success was called 'miraculous' even by rationalists who do not believe in miracles. There was no doubt that his fasts made Calcutta and Delhi safe for Muslims and had salutary effect even in the rest of both the Dominions.

It showed, what he always held, that in Satyagraha even one perfect satyagrahi would be sufficient to change the course of events.

The Hindu communalists saw that Gandhiji was getting successful in his mission of communal unity. Their political ideology was for a different type of State and social order. They saw that Gandhiji was the greatest obstacle in the realization of that ideal. And since Gandhiji, even though constantly fasting and growing old, was 'doing' and not at all 'dying', they decided that they should themselves make him 'Die', if nature refused to do so. We know how that decision was carried out.

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Gandhiji's life-long experiments of Satyagraha provide us with ample material for determining the conditions for a Satyagraha against war. This article has been already too long, and I should be taxing the patience of the reader over much if I quoted and related his life and writings, at length. So I shall satisfy myself with some of his conclusive opinions:—

(1) Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force.

(2) In the last resort it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love.

(3) Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property, though its habitual practice does prove a better bulwark than the possession of armed men to defend them. Non-violence in the very nature of things is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.

(4) Individuals and nations who would practise non-violence must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is therefore inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e. modern imperialism which is frankly based on force for its defence.

(5) Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all—children, young men and women or grown up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.

(6) It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the law is good enough for individuals it is not for masses of mankind.

## MASTER CHRISTIAN?

MAUDE ROYDEN SHAW

I FIRST MET Mahatma Gandhi in 1928, having an introduction to him from that great worker for peace, Jane Addams. I was staying with Sir Stanley Jackson in Calcutta and was to go on from there to Wardha. I remember Sir Stanley asking me where I was going and, when I told him, an English Peer of the realm who was present, asked with astonishment and disgust 'why I wanted to go and see that fellow?' I replied that, since I was lucky enough to have an introduction to the greatest man then living, I would surely be a fool not to use it; and added wickedly that, the Mahatma being a very accessible person, I thought I could persuade him to see Lord—if he would like me to ask. Lord—nearly exploded with rage, and one of Sir Stanley's secretaries added fuel to the flame by saying 'Well, I suppose Gandhi is more like Jesus Christ than anyone else!'

Surely the young Englishman was right. I call myself a Christian and Mahatma Gandhi did not: but indeed he was 'more like Jesus Christ than any one else' I ever met.

When he came to England for the Round Table Conference in 1931 he came to the Guildhouse, a centre of Christian worship in London, to speak to us about Voluntary Poverty. The church was crammed and hundreds stood outside hoping at least to see him. What was there to see? A very little man, wrapped in a piece of cotton cloth, plain, spectacled, toothless and with a husky voice. No speaker ever owed less to any physical impressiveness than Gandhiji. No speaker needed it less. There was a silence one might call deathlike but that it was a tense and living silence, when he spoke. People seemed almost unwilling to draw breath for fear of losing a word. And as he unfolded to us his philosophy of voluntary poverty I think no one failed

to note how closely his thought and even his words resembled those of our Lord Christ.

I remember one moment when, with a flash of humour, he set us laughing.

He had spoken of absolute poverty and said: 'But you will say, 'Mr. Gandhi, you are wearing a piece of cloth: to whom does it belong?' And I shall have to admit that, as long as I have a body, I must wrap it in something', but (with a wide and beaming smile) 'if anyone wants to take it off me, he can have it. I shan't call in the police!' A body of eighteen stalwart policemen with whom a paternal British Government had provided Gandhiji, burst into a roar of laughter as he turned a look on them, and the whole audience followed suit.

When we went out into the street, I looked for my car, for I was to have the honour of driving the Mahatma to his next engagement. It was not to be seen in the crowd and I noticed that car after car came past, slowing down and looking hopefully at Gandhiji, with the wish that he might consent to enter one of them. It was a cold wet day and after all a 'piece of cotton cloth' was not much of a protection against our English climate. I felt bound to suggest that Gandhi should not wait for my car but, when I did so, he said—'No, I shall go in yours'. I have never felt so proud in my life. And again I was struck with the resemblance between his action and his response to life to that of Jesus of Nazareth—'as having nothing, yet possessing all things'. Gandhiji had no car and everywhere cars surged around, hoping for the honour of serving him.

Mine came at last and we got in. The Mahatma sat silent for a while and then asked me about some honour that Agatha Harrison had told him had been conferred on me. What was it? I said I thought it must be that I had been made a Doctor of Divinity. He was silent again for a moment and then he said, with an exaggerated air of extreme respect—'So you know *all* about Divinity!' and it was impossible not to burst out laughing.

In those years I was, or believed myself to be, as absolute a Pacifist as the Mahatma himself. I had been so since the first World War broke out in 1914, and held the faith until the second came in 1939. A few weeks after this overwhelming catastrophe I gave up and admitted publicly that I felt we were bound, in all the circumstances, to fight.

Gandhi heard of this and in an article in *Harijan* he reasoned with and gently rebuked me. Miss Agatha Harrison asked me if I would like to reply but I had no heart to do so, and no right. I felt all the justice of his rebuke. Spiritual power was indeed the best—the only perfect—weapon with which to meet material force. I have never hesitated in my conviction of that. My rejection of the Pacifism in which I had believed implied no doubt. But circumstances forced me to realize that it was a weapon that neither I as an individual nor we British as a nation could use. As a friend of mine said, 'You Pacifists are trying to use a weapon you haven't got.'

In 1932, when Japan attacked China, Dr. H. R. L. Sheppard, an English parson, Dr. Herbert Gray, a Scotch minister, and I proposed to call together an army of pacifists who should offer themselves to the League of Nations as the 'shock troops' of peace. We were presented with a unique opportunity, unlikely ever to come again in the history of mankind. I need not go into all the circumstances but will only say that, in modern warfare, the interposition of an unarmed body of civilians of both sexes between two opposing armies will practically always be an impossibility. At that moment it was *not* impossible. China and Japan were fighting across the streets of Shanghai and Shanghai is on the sea. If the League of Nations could have gathered a Peace Army, transported it to Shanghai and landed it on the Bund or quay which was then under international control, we soldiers of peace would have been but a few hundred yards from the battle.

We launched our appeal. Because of its dramatic character it immediately received an enormous publicity. Sir

Eric Drummond,<sup>1</sup> then Secretary-General to the League of Nations, himself handed our letter to the press of the world whose representatives were gathered in Geneva. In response to our entreaty that he should not regard our plan as 'fantastic', he replied that he did not at all think it so, and advised us to take the necessary steps to get it brought before the Assembly of the League at that time in session.

Meanwhile the proposal to form a Peace Army was received everywhere with tremendous interest and leading articles appeared in the newspapers of countries so widely different as the United States of America and Sierra Leone. Comment, even when sceptical, was friendly. We could not say that the world was ignorant of our offer.

Our first volunteer was an Irish Brigadier General; our second an engineer; our third a Chinese Christian, Mr. T. Z. Koo.

And after that? From the world-wide publicity we received, how many recruits? Just—only *just*—over a thousand.

We approached several Governments represented at the Assembly of the League of Nations with our plan, but with such a following what could we expect? Courteous refusals or silence. That is what we got, and no wonder.

Perhaps we should have sought to go alone. Perhaps three Pacifists being killed in a manner so much in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi might have worked a miracle. How can we tell? While we were writing to Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries and awaiting replies, the golden opportunity was lost. Fighting speed over a vast front. Our project became impracticable. It seems in the highest degree unlikely that it will ever be practicable again.

But, though at the time I did not realize it, I see how this failure shook my faith in Pacifism. I had believed that pacifists were only longing for a chance of dying in the cause of peace as soldiers in the cause of war. There were and are some, but how few!

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Perth.

For some years I still believed myself to be a Pacifist. Then the war of 1939-45 came and, after some weeks of agonised indecision, I knew that I had no faith at all in the ability of any European or American nation to use the weapon of spiritual power. We had no practice in it, no discipline, and no real faith in it. The only alternative to fighting with material weapons was to do nothing. To do nothing could not, in my judgment, be the right answer to a world in agony.

I know there were men and women who found ways of service. There were quakers and others who gave their lives in Red Cross work, as stretcher-bearers or in ambulance units, and gave them gladly. But there was nothing resembling the Sathgrahi of Gandhi's disciples; no concerted, trained, and disciplined soldiers of the spiritual Power of God.

I could not help feeling that those who recognised this dreadful truth and went out to fight evil with the weapons they *could* use, had been trained and disciplined to use, were in the right.

But I recognized that this facing of facts was, as I have said, a dreadful thing. After nearly two thousand years of Christianity we were still unable to do better than rely on the frightful instruments of material force. There lay the sting of Mahatma Gandhi's rebuke to me and there the reason why I had no answer to make. To believe that in A. D. 1139 we Christians could not wield the spiritual power our Master did was to be worthy of rebuke indeed. In common with all Christians who felt forced to fight, I felt the horrible disgrace, the tragic failure, that war is to us. The best Christian in the world and the man most like Christ was a Hindu. He was Mahatma Gandhi.

## MAHATMA GANDHI AND CHRISTIAN PACIFISM

REGINALD REYNOLDS

THE SOCIAL doctrines associated with Christianity have differed very widely, but may be roughly divided into two streams of thought.

The main stream—that of orthodoxy—has always been conservative. The State is regarded as sacrosanct and the existing social order something to be accepted with resignation. St. Peter is quoted as saying that we should 'submit to every ordinance of man', while St. Paul goes even further (Romans xiii, 1 & 2) claiming that all power is of God 'and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.' The doctrine of social submission is summed up in Colossians iii, 22 with the words: 'Servants, obey your masters.'

Side by side with this tradition of submissiveness there has been one of revolt, which also has its Scriptural warrant. Revolutionaries in Christian countries for hundreds of years took their inspiration from the Bible. \*There was the *Magnificat*—the Christian *Marseillaise*—and the thunder of St. James in his General Epistle, where he denounces the rich. There was Jesus himself calling King Herod 'that fox', exposing the Pharisees as hypocrites and over-turning the tables of the money changers in the Temple.

I have no wish to discuss here the contradictions in the New Testament—real or apparent. I was brought up to pay more attention to the living spirit than to the letter. The spoken word is not always correctly recorded, nor are a man's actions. When the earliest copies of such records belong to a much later period than the words or actions themselves one can allow for mistakes, glosses and even deliberate interpolations in a long succession of Copyists. After that (in the case of the Bible) most of us have to rely upon a translation, the accuracy of which we cannot check. And,

finally, the correct interpretation may still elude us, even if all else is assumed to be reliable.

But what is inescapable is the fact that, however reliable the text, the Holy Spirit in man is still the ultimate guide. When Peter said to Jesus, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God', Jesus replied that flesh and blood had not revealed this to him 'but my Father which is in heaven.' How, indeed, could it be otherwise? We cannot recognize what is good except by its appeal to that which is good in ourselves; and even those Christians who claim infallibility for the Pope or the Bible are assuming an infallible judgement in themselves, to recognize infallibility infallibly when they see it!

The Society of Friends, aware of this inescapable ultimate appeal to 'that of God' in ourselves, has been perhaps the least slavish of all Christian denominations in its use of Biblical texts. But even among Quakers, and to a very large extent among other Christians, 'Scriptural warrant' has often been allowed to obscure the free operation of the Holy Spirit in man. It is therefore not remarkable that Christians, in spite of the radiant pacifism of Jesus (which is clear when we look at his life as a whole) have been led away by isolated passages, particularly where these have appeared to support some line of action on which they themselves have already decided. They have found, on the one hand, a warrant for blind obedience to the State, and (on the other hand) a justification for violent denunciation of the ruling class. Only the few appear to have seen that the life of Jesus, regarded as a whole, justifies neither of these attitudes.

Christian pacifism, because it is still tied to a tradition that looks for texts and precedents, has been in difficulties for many years. Its first reaction to Mahatma Gandhi was indication of its dilemma. Christian pacifists had clearly rejected the orthodox view which claimed blind obedience to the State to be a moral duty in all circumstances—e.g. they had rejected conscription. Fortunately, among the

many contradictions in the New Testament, the Apostle who ordained submission to 'every ordinance of man' is also quoted (Acts v. 29) as saying that we should obey God rather than man. There, roughly speaking, Christian pacifism has made its stand, but always with an uneasy eye on the numerous passages urging obedience and submission to the State and the properties classes.

So, on the whole, Christian pacifists have been non-resisters, people who accepted the existing order, because in the uneasy choice of texts, it has seemed more pacific to obey and to teach obedience rather than to follow the Christ with the knotted cord. Thus, a false antithesis having been made between peace and justice, Christian pacifists in most cases chose a passive conception of peace. Granted that the antithesis was correct and Tolstoy has already shown that it was not—it seemed a natural choice. Only a minority of Christian pacifists, influenced by Tolstoy (who had also considerably influenced Gandhiji) maintained that real peace, social justice and human freedom were inseparable, and that a way must be found to seek these ends simultaneously, by peaceful means. What this minority still lacked was method that could be applied by an oppressed class or people—though pioneers such as John Woolman had already shown what could be done by a well-concerned individual. (And Tolstoy himself effected little more than that in his writings). The problem of co-operation with evil, in the form of oppression or arbitrary power, remained unsolved by those who rejected the idea of meeting violence with violence. Here and there attempts on a very limited scale had been made to apply passive resistance, but seldom or never with the backing of a strong Christian faith in the method used. (The history of the Russian *Doukhobors* is an isolated exception).

Gandhiji worried Christian pacifists and Christians generally, because he did not seem to fit into any of the accepted pictures of Christian behaviour. It was not simply that he was a Hindu, though religious prejudice

has often been traceable in the criticisms passed on him by Christians from whom one might have expected more charity. But the fact was that this man, who spoke with reverence of Jesus, and was hailed by a few as a better follower of Christ than any who bore his name, simply did not fit into any existing groove in Christian thought. Certainly, had he used such language regarding the Viceroy or the ruling class as Jesus used when speaking of Herod and the Scribes and Pharisees, most English Christians would have been scandalised. But they would at least have understood, and a few would even have sympathised. Had he resorted to "shock tactics" like Jesus in the Temple, there would have been the same result. But those who (by implication) rejected the Revolutionary Christ, though the texts are sufficiently clear for what they are worth, could still be sticklers on a text when it suited them. And the text that suited most leading Christian pacifists that I knew, during the last twenty years was that in which Jesus told us to go two miles with the man who compels us to go one.

The position, while India was still a subject country, was a little curious. There were, for the English pacifist, two problems. Firstly, since India was held down by force (in which the Christian pacifist did not believe and in which he was not prepared to participate) there was the question as to what he should do himself. As a citizen he shared responsibility for what his country was doing, and clearly had an inescapable responsibility with regard to it. It was a curious fact, however, that for many years most Christian pacifists in Britain appeared to be much more concerned with what Mahatma Gandhi ought to do than with what they should do themselves. I say this with shame, for it is one of my most painful memories of those eventful years. Again and again the question of our responsibility was laid aside to discuss the 'un-Christian' and 'unpacifist' character of civil disobedience and non-cooperation in India. And the verdict was nearly always the same

—a strange verdict from those who not only shared responsibility for British imperialism but were indirect beneficiaries from it. (An even stranger verdict it was from so many of these, who had done nothing themselves to protest against the unnatural bondage of subject peoples to ourselves and our government). Again and again Christian pacifists declared that Gandhiji's way was wrong. As I shall point out, one result of the Mahatma's life and work is that this view is rapidly changing, but it can be found even to-day—for example, in a recent article in *Reconciliation* (April 1948) by L. W. Grensted.

The basis of criticism was nearly always the same and arose from the 'text-tide' condition of Christian thought, even among Christian pacifists, who generally belong to the more liberal schools of theology. I don't mean that *all* Christian pacifists made such criticisms. There were many individual exceptions. But until very recently perhaps until Gandhiji's death—there was a general view, which can be traced in the writings of prominent Christian pacifists, that even non-violent resistance was wrong. They believed, not in passive resistance, but in what was called 'non-resistance'—though the same people would often be found to be as much concerned as anyone with their own legal and property rights (a very human inconsistency).

I never discovered how the exponents of this view justified opposition to conscription, which is undoubtedly a form of passive resistance—that is to say, a non-violent refusal to obey authority. How, and at what point, such resistance to authority ceased to be pacifist was never, as far as I know, decided. As I have said, the pivot of the whole case was the text from the Sermon on the Mount: 'and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain,' the possible implications of a literal interpretation of this passage (which, for some reason, was considered not to apply to conscription) are worth some brief attention.

I do not think that those who base their theories of non-resistance on this text mean that they will obey anybody's

orders on any occasion. I never tested this assumption, but I do not suppose that if I went up to one of my fellow pacifists of the Christian faith and ordered him to walk a mile with me he would immediately leave everything he was doing to obey me. I don't think I could get him to go the first mile, let alone the second; and certainly would not blame him, because I should not do so myself without some good and demonstrable reason. (In any case it is not clear what happens if two people give contradictory orders!) The key word, therefore, is 'compel' and behind that compulsion there is, I think, assumed to be the force of 'authority.' So that once more we are back in the authoritarian tradition of Peter and Paul, as quoted at the beginning of this article. There is, of course, an unwritten exception, which has to be fitted in as well as you can, that you will not allow yourself to be compelled to fight. But, for the rest you are living in the orbit of orthodox Christianity, in which the State is sacred.

But wherein exactly lies this sacredness? States are of many kinds. There are democracies and dictatorships, deriving their authority respectively from popular opinion or from naked force. There have been absolute monarchies, all of them (if traced far enough back) beginning with a conquest or a usurpation. The Empire to which Peter and Paul paid such respect passed from one successful adventure to another, the prize of the most successful general in the Roman army. If we examine these various forms of government we shall see that the only thing they have in common is ability to enforce their orders. In a revolution a government ceases to be a government from the moment that it can no longer enforce its will upon the country; and the new government comes into being as such from the moment that it *can* enforce its will.

Here indeed is a strange position for a pacifist to be maintaining, when he respects as sacred the very force which he himself abjures. Stranger still, having regarded it as wrong to oppose a government (no matter how

passively) the moment it is overthrown by force and a new government set up by the rebels, he must show the same subservience towards them that he did to their predecessors. St Paul, in fact, was distinctly muddled when he said that those who resisted authority would be damned. That, surely, would only apply if they resisted unsuccessfully! If they succeeded and overthrew 'the powers that be', which he claimed to be 'ordained of God', they, in their turn, would become 'the powers that be' and could claim the same divine sanction. And Christian pacifists would then have to make a holy duty of obeying the very men whose rebellion they had condemned the previous day.

It is from this ethical fog that Gandhiji has done much, at last, to rescue us. I write as one who began as a Christian pacifist, spent some fifteen years in the wilderness of secular politics (as barren a field as ever a man ploughed) and returned to active work in the Society of Friends after the war. The change, as I saw it then, returning like a spiritual Rip van Winkle to the familiar scene, was already starting before the final martyrdom of the Mahatma roused the whole world to a new appraisal of the man it had laughed at and slighted. Something *had* happened, though it was hard to describe accurately or to evaluate. But I felt that at last the cause I had once hoped and worked for, the cause of which I had despaired, the cause I had abandoned, was on the road to victory. *The Christian world had at last begun to realise the significance of Gandhiji as an exponent of Christian principles* with regard to specific problems which Jesus, in his general ethical teaching, did not apparently discuss—though, of course, we must always remember that the recorded sayings of Jesus can only be a small fragment of all he actually said, even in the brief period of his ministry that is covered by the Gospels.

In one respect, text-bound as it is, the Christian Church has provided remarkably capable of growth. There is no specific condemnation of slavery, even in the Gospels,

although slavery was among the glaring evils of the First Century A. D. And there are, on the contrary, innumerable passages (especially in the Old Testament) which clearly condone slavery. Yet the Christian conscience was slowly awoken on this subject, and (texts or no texts) Christians became aware in the nineteenth century that slavery was utterly contrary to the *Spirit of Christ*. The slave owners and their friends thumped their Bibles and thundered their texts about 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' and the like. But somehow it was the Spirit which lived and the letter which perished. And slavery perished with it. In much the same way, in spite of all the isolated and mutually contradictory texts that have been used to obscure it, the picture of the true Christ has been once more manifest to us in the quiet, unarmed resistance of the soul to armed force. We saw it at last in Mahatma Gandhi, the man who loved us and fought us, the man who fitted none of our ready-made patterns, the Hindu who was a better Christian than any of us.

The Christ-spirit as so many of us came to see it (and many more will do as the years go on), through the life and death of this man in whom that spirit reigned, is something related at once to our own time and problems and to the Temple, nor is it a spine-less slave of force. It is the Christ who 'stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem', unarmed among his powerful enemies, doing the will of God and quietly setting aside the will of man to silence him. It is the spirit that the truth has made free. It is the day-spring from on high that has never forsaken us, 'to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

## “WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS”

WHEN I survey the wondrous cross,  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ my God ;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down ;  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small ;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

—*Isaac Watts*

## PEACE THROUGH PRAYER

PRIYARANJAN SEN

OUR prayer is a heart search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without His support. No effort is complete without prayer—without a definite recognition that the best human endeavour is of no effect if it has not God's blessing behind. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-purification, to inward search.

*Mahatma Gandhi*

I REMEMBER vividly an evening in Delhi in April 1947. Taking advantage of my chance stay there I paid a visit to the Birla Temple, to attend Mahatma Gandhi's prayer meeting. There was a heavy downpour, and, to my disappointment, there could be no meeting. At the appointed time, Mahatmaji stood at the door with folded hands and in the attitude of prayer, but there could be no reciting from the scriptures. The profile was clearly visible from the position I had taken up. It did one good to look at the figure. When those who had come to attend the meeting were returning home, I stood on, looking at 'the great soul' intently. On his face were written sweetness ineffable, calm undisturbed, an inward glow that could be almost felt. His very appearance was a sufficient commentary on the text that he preached, the idea of which he was the living embodiment.

Truth and non-violence: there are perhaps no two words more used (or abused?) in recent times in the Gandhian parlance, but we may not lose sight of them in any effort to understand Gandhiji properly. These words have been of the essence of 'Gandhism' whatever that might mean; they are two terms, not disjointed but united, used to indicate different aspects of the same reality. The truth had to be realized—there would be no turning back on it—

its call had to be obeyed, and in non-violence was the background against which it could be best seen. We might also state it the other way about: non-violence was possible only after one could resolve to find out the truth, through persistent struggle, and after a thorough heart-search. Gandhiji's ways were through truth and non-violence; and his followers trudged behind as best as they could, confident that their leader was in the forefront, beckoning them, exhorting them through the way—a long way set with pitfalls—to march fearlessly onward towards the ideal.

With truth and non-violence for his guide, Gandhiji was essentially a man of peace. One might misunderstand; peace and non-violence might not mean the same thing 'apparently', because the familiar content for non-violence was an opposition to the powers that ruled. But the struggle which non-violence sometimes envisaged, the conflict it implied, was perfectly compatible with peace—no, one was inconceivable without the other. The non-violent struggle always included an effort to understand the opposite's viewpoint, and it had been carefully built upon the ethical basis of life. It was an important item in an active programme, no doubt, and those who joined in the struggle invited trouble on their head—assaults, confiscation of property, imprisonments and even death. In spite of all these implications, rather by way of courting them, non-violent warfare had been the main feature of India's struggle for independence under Gandhian leadership. Such a struggle did not preclude the idea of negotiations. Ultimately, the momentous step taken in 1947 by the British Government was the result of many factors from which negotiation was not absent. But this negotiation was not a legacy of the past attitude of the Congress, but a negotiation backed by the moral strength of the nation, determined, under Gandhian leadership, to explore all the possibilities of non-violent struggle for the attainment of independence.

Gandhiji's truth and non-violence, however, have to be integrated on to the religious aspect of his life. However

we may view Gandhiji's economic, social, political and other programmes, we cannot consider these as apart from his religious outlook, from the presence of God which he felt always, probably never so keenly as when the struggle of nation-wide importance broke out. In the Gandhian technique, the importance of fasting and prayer can never be lost to sight. Truth to him is God<sup>1</sup>, and prayer to God has a distinct meaning other than begging.<sup>2</sup> In a note to the *Harijan* he wrote on the subject as follows:

I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's Law and God are not different things or facts in the sense that an earthly king and his laws are different. Because, God is an Idea, Law Him-self. Therefore, I do not think that He answers in every detail every request of ours, but there is no doubt that he rules our action.<sup>3</sup>

Prayers which were to him more than his food and which sustained him wonderfully through his long fasts received a new orientation on the eve of Indian independence. A line from *Zendāvestā*, a few words from the Japanese prayer to the Buddha, verses from the Quoran dilating on the merciful nature of the Providence, lines from the Gita, verses from *Tulsi Ramayana*, concluded by songs from Rabindranath or Bhajans from mediaeval saints—these might puzzle the ignorant, but Gandhiji so often explained it all to the satisfaction of his hearers that he stood on safe ground when he took the audience into his confidence, and they would have to be told sooner or later. The *Rāmdhun*, now sung in snatches by the sweeper who moves about, now in family circles by trained singers, attracted a large section of the audience and his earnest invitation to everybody to cooperate had given the whole thing a unity of its

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<sup>1</sup> 'God can never be attained except in living truth.'—Post-prayer Speech, 19-1-48.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. B. Shaw's remark on his 92nd birthday: 'Prayer is not waste of time except when it is mere begging'.

<sup>3</sup> The *Harijan*, 23rd March, 1946.

own. His morning prayers were usually attended by a few inmates of the Asram or the number might go up and might get additional strength through occasional early visitors. But the evening prayers were largely attended. Students and teachers, factory workers and professional politicians, Congress workers and officers in departments run by the Government, they fisted side by side, listened with rapt attention and joined in rhythmic beatings of the palms when there was the *Rāmdhun*. Gandhiji had felt the need of speaking to his audience and sharing with them the thoughts that were uppermost in his mind. In the serious mood which a prayer meeting was bound to create, Gandhiji spoke, after prayers, to his audience in a language and style that came straight from the heart and went also straight to those who had gathered to hear him. These post-prayer speeches in Sodepur and Noakhali, in Bihar and Belliaghata, and lastly in Delhi began to play an important part in the national programme. He agreed to accept the cooperation offered by the All India Radio to record the Delhi post-prayer speeches and relay them every night at 8-30 p.m. There were arrangements, also in some A.I.R. centres to give out the versions in the different provincial languages. It was my privilege to make out the Bengali versions and broadcast them from the Calcutta station mostly from October to the morning of the great tragedy, and I realized everyday more and more the inexhaustible store of energy and the mental alertness, the spirit of service and the resourcefulness which the speeches showed. When the nation was bewildered by the sudden outburst of the communal frenzy, and reports of murder, rape and loot blurred the visions of ordinary men, clear and unmistakable were his directions of which the following, selected at random, may well serve for a specimen:

It was unbecoming of men and women to be bullied out of their own homes. They should stay there and face death rather than dishonour and loss of self-respect. They should fear none but God. They should

defend their religion and their honour with their lives. If they did not have that courage it was far better for them to go away. If they had decided to leave East Bengal, it was the duty of upper-class Hindus, such as the doctors, the lawyers, the merchants to see that poor scheduled castes and others went first. They themselves should be the last and not the first to leave.<sup>1</sup>

At the same prayer meeting he expressed satisfaction at the successful culmination of satyagraha in Mysore State, and exhorted his audience not to damage the garden of the Birla House, not to pluck even a leaf without the previous permission of the gardener in return for the courtesy extended by the owner of the House in accommodating the audience for the prayer meeting on his grounds. At the same meeting was discussed the relation which should subsist between the public and the State services. Sometimes these post-prayer speeches were also utilized in Gandhiji's replying to his correspondents, picking up the more important letters which would call for a discussion. Religious toleration, the Roman Script, the propriety of reciting verses from the Quoran in these meetings, the musical powers of Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, the Kashmir trouble, the Junagadh episode, Satyagraha in South Africa, removal of controls, the function of the Charkha, the frequent misuse of the alarm chain in Bihar on the railways—all had their place in the strange assortment which he served before his audience ; they were assembled together in one unit which seemed the only bright picture against a dark background. He seldom used the mike, but spoke naturally, only allowing the A.I.R. people to make their own arrangements, but not disturbing the audience. The crying of the babies, the hooting of the motor horns, the whirr of the aeroplanes were also there, but his voice went on, sometimes interrupted by a fit of cough,

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<sup>1</sup> Post-prayer Speech, 17th October, 1947. The translation is mine.

but always trying to obey the almost self-imposed time-limit.

How the words vibrate through the ages: If you do nothing really to serve truth and non-violence, if they are not at all reflected in your conduct, then the words are meaningless to you; if you merely mention them in that fashion, nothing but harm will come out of it.... There must be harmony between a man's thought, words and action.<sup>1</sup>

I do not believe at all in conversion: let him who is a Christian be a better Christian, a Muhammadan be a better Muhammadan, a Sikh be a better Sikh than he had been. Sikhism is a religion of self-control, it contains the liberal advice of Sri Granth Saheb, at its back is the *sādhana* of the martyrs—so I am full of praise of it. The real Sikh must honour them; every body must be steadfast in his own faith, undeterred by whatever happens in the world.<sup>2</sup>

When the flames of communal frenzy leaped up and hid the fair face of heaven, Mahatmaji warned us again and again of the impending catastrophe. Apart from the fear that the destruction of the Yadavas, as described in the Mahābhārata, might prove a close historical parallel to the trend of our mutual relations, he pointed to world conditions and said:

The eyes of all men are now on India; India is the hope today of Asia and Africa; no, not merely that; today India is the land of hope for all the world. If India wants to fulfil that hope then she must put a stop to all fratricide. Indians must live together as brothers. The first condition for bringing about that happy day is a pure heart. Do we not desire to see God?<sup>3</sup>

The Hindu-Mussalman relations, so much strained under altered conditions, brought forth from him the exclamation

<sup>1</sup> Post-prayer Speech, 27th Dec., 1947.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 25th December, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 20th October, 1947.

tion: What do I hear on all sides today? Three crores and a half of Muhammadans are to be bounded out of India? Does it carry any sense? I can by no means tolerate it. I do not want to live to witness that climax.<sup>1</sup>

Again: If this poison spreads through all the parts of India, then life would be unbearable. It is a matter of sorrow for me, a matter of sorrow for Hindustan. Let me place it before you.<sup>2</sup>

What would such a man have to do with the Himalayas? For him the peace that is in the lonely hills had no charm of its own; and to an unfriendly invitation to him to retire to the Himalayas now that India had gained her independence, he smilingly replied—why, I shall go to the Himalayas only when I can take all of you with me. For him the work was not finished, but a new chapter had opened in the history of India for Indians to write as well as they might, and the role in which he had been playing—the role of an adviser and a friend—was not yet over.

His achievement in the cause of peace will be seen in its proper perspective only by future generation: the way in which he prevented—he alone by his voice—the further disintegration of India, and raised inter-dominion or communal squabbles on to a humanitarian level. That single mighty voice has been silenced in death, but his bequest is with us, and we may recall the words uttered about two thousand years ago, in a sense which has to be grasped in a fresh manner to-day:

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:  
not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your  
heart be troubled, either let it be afraid.

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<sup>1</sup>Post-prayer speech on 26-11-47.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 21st Nov., 1947.

## SOME PIVOTAL PRINCIPLES OF PEACE

GURDIAL MULLIK

FOR CENTURIES, the churches have rung with the choral prayer of the people, 'Grant us peace, O Lord, in our time.' Has their soul's appeal been answered? Yes and No. If human history is read in terms of wars which have been fought from time to time, though only over certain limited areas of the limitless earth, then it would appear that the above prayer has not as yet been heard by the All-Highest. But if history is viewed, on the other hand, as it ought to be, in the twin context of the whole of humanity and of the millenia through which it has lived, then it will have to be admitted that the story of mankind is punctuated more with periods—and long ones, too—of peace than with the commas—and they were, fortunately, short ones—of conflict. As Gandhiji rightly says in his *Hind Swaraj*:

The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms, but on the force of truth or love. . . . Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force or love of the soul. . . . History then is a record of an interruption of the course of Nature ; Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.

Thus, love or fellow-feeling is a more natural and normal condition of human life than the occasional alarums and excursions of the war-mongers. Bellicosity, therefore, is both unnatural and abnormal.

What creates, however, periodical breaches in the basis and bulwark of society, which is love-force? There is only

one answer to this question, however cleverly we may camouflage it under the painted and pompous veneer and varnish of vaunted plausibility. Greed is the goad which drives man, singly or collectively, to disrupt the peaceful day-to-day life of the group to which he belongs, as well as his own. Hence, Gandhiji and Gurudeva, following the trail and teaching of the long line of the illustrious teachers of humanity, repeatedly laid in our own time, which has been disfigured and darkened by two wars within the space of a single generation, stress on the eschewing of the evil of acquisition. For, as Socrates says:

All wars amongst us arise on account of a desire to acquire wealth.

What is, however, the genesis of this greed which degrades man, the divine, to the reprehensible level of a rabid dog? It is self-will. To quote from *Theologia Germanica*:

If there were no self-will, there would be no proprietorship. There is no proprietorship in heaven, and that is why contentment, peace, and blessedness are there. . . . He who has anything of his own, or desires to have anything, is a slave ; and, he who has nothing is free and at liberty and is in bondage to no man.

And so it comes to pass that under the urge and itch of acquisition man exchanges his birthright of freedom for slavery—slavery with a silvery lining though it may be!—with a Pandora's Box to boot. He could, however, train himself in the science and art of subduing ; nay, sublimating his self-will to the One Will, that governs the Universe in the interests of all. Therefore, it is that he has evolved out of his higher self, of which he is conscious, however, only in moments of harmony, religion or code of ethics, revolving round the central truth of the *Upanishads*—a foundation on which Gurudeva and Gandhiji built, like every aspirant after the Eternal, their individual lives:—

The whole world is enveloped by God, enjoy life by living it in the spirit of a trustee (*lit.* by renouncing it).

Indeed, every human being is a born Socialist and only if he would be true to himself, self-seeking, and its offspring self-will, will both disappear like darkness before dawn. For, his soul, being part of the Oversoul, which embraces all, severally as well as jointly, lives only by the faith that it knows the alchemy and art of making a brother of 'the other than himself', the so-called stranger who has been only dubbed so by the schismatic and schemastic instincts and impulses of his small self, whether individual or enlarged as a community.

In short, there is only one pivotal principle of peace ; namely, to let man's larger and luminous, all-embracing and all-loving, self occupy the first place in his vision and in his work, and his calculating, and quarrelsome, greedy and grasping, self the second. This will imbue him with the spirit of contentment and quiet which, in their turn, will induce at-one-ment in himself and with all others. The spirit of concord is born, verily, in the concord of the Spirit.

## II

But how to propagate this pivotal principle among the people and how to impress on their minds the apparatus of its applications? For this purpose, the attack will have to be from two sides ; on the young and on the adult. The former will have to be furnished, while they are yet in their teens and have not become case-hardened and callous and cocksure of the finality of their own particular philosophy or pattern of life, an ideology which will burn into their consciousness the truth of their common humanity with its concomitant common quest for harmony and happiness. The latter will require, however, a ready-made programme of action. Now the young are influenced, for good or for ill, mostly by their mothers and their teachers. As it has been well said:

One generation of mothers thinking clearly and intelligently and with the right ideals could re-make the world.

And,

'What you would put into the future you must hide in the heart of a child.'

And, indeed, no better set of fundamental ethical principles could be placed by the teachers and the mothers before the young than the following, which was adopted unanimously at the Second World Youth Congress held at New York in August 1938:

- (a) Man's foremost loyalty is to religion of philosophical truth which comes before his allegiance to any institution or individual ;
- (b) he requires complete freedom for self-development, for the right to work, for freedom of speech, for freedom of association and action ;
- (c) his personality can only be developed in, and through, service to the common good ; and
- (d) his ideals must be expressed in action and love, in the creation of human solidarity and co-operation.

Next to the mother and the teacher, in the scale of salutary influences on the young, and on the old too, is the writer. And what should be his contribution to the cause of world concord and world co-operation? Let the International Secretary of the P.E.N.—a world-organization of poets and playwrights, editors and essayists, and novelists—speak:

The writer should make truth the touchstone of all his work, by using his gifts to illumine dark places ; by refusing to pander to base separative emotions, by refraining from expressing ideas that would inflame racial, national or personal hatred, and first of all and for all time by striving to attain peace within himself.

But in our modern, money-dominated world, it is the economist who very often shapes the points-of-view and passions and projects of people. However, he, too, dis-

illusioned and disciplined by the tragedy of technocracy, has been compelled to-day to talk of co-operation, as against cut-throat competition, which has created so much hatred natured and holocaust in the past. For, this is what Dr. Radhakamal Mukherjee said some time ago in the course of his address at the Harvard University:

A universalist *system of ethics* has to be built up for the promotion of an effective unified world government on the basis of three fundamental *moral forms*: (a) conservation and proper utilisation of the world's natural resources; (b) freedom and equality of opportunities for the less advanced people; and (c) free international interchange and dissemination of scientific and technological research and knowledge. Without these principles creating and sustaining a global unity for man, the end of this century might see his re-barbarization or extinction.

Then there is the man of religion who, though a back-number at present in the counsels of the nations, can yet be at the head of the pageant of peace. Let him found an inter-religious fellowship in his own neighbourhood and see that like the Quaker he can cultivate his inherent and intuitive capacity to see 'that of God in every man' and to realize in his daily life 'unity with the whole creation.'

In these diverse ways, strong bridges of brotherhood will be built between people and people, as distinct from governments which not seldom, to keep themselves in power, manufacture the dynamite of discord in the dark secrecy and behind the black screen of their party-politics. And then every individual will look upon himself as a citizen of the world, realizing, in the words of Robert Bridges:

Each race and tribe is as a flower,  
Set in God's garden with its dower  
Of special instinct, and man's grace,  
Compact of all, must all embrace.

To conclude, the pathway to peace can be built only with bricks of 'creative co-operation' or with the cement of self-giving, of which Nature, it has been truly said, is a shining example:

See Nature, everything in existence is giving out something, all agencies are giving with one another. There is no thought of taking.

But having eyes and ears, alas! we neither hear this great truth, proclaimed hourly by Nature, nor see her endless illustrations thereof. Indeed, in every manifestation of her varied and wondrous working she teaches man, 'Grow like a flower,' from within, without.

## THE COW'S TRUE DEVOTEE

MIRA BEHN

BAPU'S love for the cow was as real as his love for humanity—not false or sentimental, but practical and earnest.

When Bapu gave me instructions for the preparing of his mud hut at Segaoon (now Sevagram), the only other building in the compound was to be a small cowshed, so situated that he could watch the cows while sitting in his verandah.

Whatever a problem might be, domestic, social, political, big or small, Bapu had the unique capacity of putting his finger on the spot of diagnosing the trouble, and showing the true remedy. This capacity might well be called a divine instinct, for it certainly was derived from Bapu's conquest of self, which opened up before him the Path of Truth.

With regard to the sufferings of our Mother Cow, even in the early Sabarmati days, Bapu had already fixed his attention on two fundamental points. These were, the need to breed 'dual-purpose' cattle (for draught and milk), and the need to remove the competition of the buffalo. The meaning behind the first point is this: There are three types of cattle in India: (i) Those, the males of which are strong and fast draught animals, and the females poor milk yielders. (ii) Those, the males of which are poor draught animals, being slow and heavy, and the females of which are copious milk yielders. (iii) Those, the males of which are good draught animals, and the females of which are reasonably good yielders of milk. (The Harijana is perhaps the best example of this dual-purpose type). If you breed the first type it leads to keeping buffalos for milk and neglect of the cow and her female progeny. If you breed the second, it leads to the slaughter of the male calves, and the need to keep another type of cow for producing draught

animals. Whereas, if the third type is bred, the farmer gets good bullocks and good milk from one and the same animal.

The meaning behind the second point is that if the farmer keeps buffalos the cows are completely neglected in their favour. All the best food goes to the buffalos, and the cows are kept only because the farmer must have bullocks. In fact buffalo keeping leads to a horrible situation. The male calf of the buffalo is starved into dying a 'natural' death, or is sent to the butcher, and the cow and her calf (if it happens to be female) are given just enough to keep them alive. The ready cash, brought in by the sale of the buffalo's ghee and milk, turns the farmer's head, and he does not see that his own economics are being ruined; that he is keeping two animals where one would have served, and that, into the bargain, the size and strength of the cow are going down generation by generation, with the result that one fine day her male calves will no longer have the strength to pull the plough. It should also not be forgotten that buffalo's milk is nutritively unbalanced, is hard to digest, and very bad for small children.

In all matters Bapu kept the toiling millions uppermost in his mind, and in this problem of India's cattle he saw a double tragedy—the disastrous deterioration of the cow, and the ruin of the farmer's economics. If the Indian peasant is to survive, the Indian cow has to survive with him. They are inseparable. She has to be his Cow of Plenty, giving his sweet milk, strong bullocks and rich manure, and he has to be her devotee, feeding and tending her with loving care as the Mother of Prosperity.

Whatever Bapu preached he practised, and the small cowshed at Segaon was the starting point of a big scheme, now centred at Gopuri, Wardha, for the development of a local breed (gaolao), then little known, but which is now taking its place amongst the recognized dual-purpose cattle of India. At Sabarmati also there had been quite a big cowshed, and the Gir breed was studied for dual purposes.

The outer world has but little idea of the extent to which

Bapu loved and served the cow. The following incident, related to me by the friend concerned, which occurred in January of last year, shows us vividly the depth of his feelings about her.

During his last fast Bapu happened to get news of a big Gowshala where things were going on so badly that the cows were actually dying of starvation. He at once called the friend responsible for its management and told him to leave by the next train and put things right. 'How can I leave Delhi while you are fasting?' exclaimed the friend. 'Don't talk like that,' replied Bapu, 'but go at once. The cows' lives are more precious than mine.'

## GANDHIJI AND PEACE THROUGH EDUCATION

MARGARET BARR

IN WHAT was probably his last book, *The Outlook for Homo Sapiens*, H. G. Wells made a powerful and reasoned plea for the rapid introduction on a world-scale of a type of education which should be designed to turn out men and women who should be first and foremost citizens of the world. Indeed he went further than that, as his book is much more than a plea for improved education. It is a solemn warning that, unless this is achieved, the outlook for Homo Sapiens is bleak indeed. Can anyone look round the world of to-day and want to contradict him, or even to suggest that his forecast was unduly pessimistic? It would certainly appear that civilization is faced with a race between education and disaster, and he would be optimistic indeed who could honestly contend that education looks like winning.

Mahatma Gandhi did not spend much time in writing books. He had even more valuable things to do. But there can be little doubt from many of his utterances that he was quite as fully aware as Mr. Wells that if the cause of world peace, to which his whole life was devoted, was to thrive, one of the first things to be done was to effect a revolution in education. He therefore set about effecting such a revolution in his own country, and Basic Education (or Nai Talim, as he preferred to call it) is his method.

'The objective of Nai Talim is the balanced and harmonious development of all the faculties—physical, intellectual and spiritual—of the individual, and the evolution of a new social order based on co-operative work'. This is the first paragraph of the revised syllabus for the training of Basic Teachers, making quite clear that Nai Talim has two parts. It aims at all-round development of the individual, as presumably all education does, at least in theory. But it also,

and equally, aims at the evolution of a new social order. Since the time of Plato there have been educational theorists who have insisted on this aspect of education, but for the most part their theories have remained theories, to be studied by B.T. students and ignored in practice. Gandhiji, however, was very much more than a theorist, and aided by competent colleagues he worked out in detail a method of education designed to fulfil this great objective. For with his clear sight and his deep understanding of human nature, he knew full well that no political revolution, the advent of no new social order however perfect, least of all national liberty by itself, could ever achieve very much unless a whole generation were educated up to live in and organize the new stage.

Nai Talim, therefore, puts education for citizenship, not as a secondary objective, but as part of the main one. For every individual is destined to be a citizen as well as a private individual. Therefore any scheme of education which truly sets before itself 'the balanced and harmonious development of all the faculties of the individual' cannot lose sight of the fact that every child is a citizen of tomorrow, and that therefore it is at least as important to make him a competent citizen as to make him a competent earner of a living.

Perhaps it may be felt by some readers at this point that this is all very well so far as it goes, but that such education is inherently dangerous. To make competent citizens for Germany's totalitarian state was the main objective of Hitler's educational reforms, as it is also of Russia's. That is true, and so long as our conception of citizenship is a narrow national one, any training for citizenship is indeed dangerous. But that is precisely where Gandhiji's conception differs so fundamentally from the German or even the Russian pattern. His aim was not to make the world safe for some particular race, class or political party. He was something far bigger than just a national leader, great though he was in that sphere, bigger

even than just a liberator of the toiling, voiceless masses, supreme though he was in *that* sphere. He was the true internationalist, the Universal Man. Though first and foremost and every inch an Indian, and the liberator of his people, his vision went far beyond the bounds of his own country and his own race. The vision which dominated his life, for which he toiled and suffered, lived and died, was the vision of a united world in which all lesser loyalties and patriotisms should be subordinated to the greatest of all loyalties—loyalty to the One God who has made all, and to the human family consisting of all His children.

We should expect, therefore, that Nai Talim would be designed to produce children capable of being competent citizens, not of one country only, but of the world. And that is exactly what we find. When we turn to the part of the syllabus for the training of teachers that is concerned with cultural activities we find the following:

‘A study of Indian History with a background of World History with special reference to the social and cultural development of man—the History of Man—the History of Education.

‘Reverential study of the different religions of the world showing how in essentials they meet in perfect harmony—The Religion of Man.’

‘A Study of Indian Geography with a background of World Geography with special reference to Economic Geography.’

Of all the subjects which are generally badly taught and which tend to turn out people with narrow ideas and loyalties, History and Religion are probably the two worst sufferers. But in Nai Talim there is a new orientation. The study of the history of one's own country is definitely set against a background of world history; the study of one's own Religion puts it in its rightful setting as one of the religions of a world whose God has never left Himself without a witness in any age and race.

In India especially the value of such teaching can hardly

be over-estimated. Had it not been for the bitterness caused by narrow religious loyalties, India might to-day have been a peaceful, united country and Gandhiji still our living leader. The rivalries, hatred and misunderstandings that arise from religious instruction of a narrow, sectarian type, especially if touched with fanaticism, are more bitter and incurable than those arising from any other cause, perhaps because they are inherently unreasonable. But whatever the reason, the fact remains, and if children can be brought up with an understanding of, and a respect for religions other than their own, there is some hope that this fertile source of warfare may be abolished.

Again in Geography also special emphasis is laid on the economic aspect and therefore on the fact that the modern world is one economic unit and no longer a bundle of self-supporting entities, each independent of, or hostile to, the rest.

But it is not only, or even chiefly, through the teaching of these and other subjects, that Nai Talim sets out to train children for responsible citizenship in a united and democratic world. Subject teaching, though important and invaluable when well done, plays a secondary role in Nai Talim, the primary role being played by the day-to-day-life of the child in all its aspects. For instance, understanding of the meaning of economic interdependence and the importance of sharing, instead of each trying to clutch as much as possible for himself, is taught from the very bottom of the Basic School through the very practical medium of the school meal. The food that is allotted is served by one or more of the children, elected by their fellows for the purpose, and must be divided out fairly. There is no question of giving extra to one's special friends, still less of taking extra for oneself. Thus the principle of the equitable distribution of such resources as are available, is taught and children encouraged from very early years to be generous and just.

Furthermore each Basic School is a miniature state in

itself in which responsibility for the making, altering and keeping of all rules rests with the children as well as the staff. In this way the every-day life of the community gives training in active responsible citizenship. And as this is accompanied by regular reading of the newspapers and discussion of the major events and personalities in the world of to-day, the children can hardly fail to grow up with a vivid sense of the oneness of the modern world and of their own places as men and women living in it, with a responsibility for the conservation of all that is great and good in the traditions which they inherit and an equal responsibility for abolishing the bad (no matter how sanctified by age and tradition) and for evolving slowly but surely a better, juster and more reasonable state of affairs.

They learn too through their school assemblies and the organization of their own miniature state, that in a democracy the way to get changes and improvements is not the way of violence and intransigence, but the slow steady way of patient thought, experiment, discussion; the way of eloquent, persuasive speech; above all the way of non-violent non-co-operation with wrong and active, unswerving loyalty to right, beginning (where all reforms must begin if they are to have any power and permanence) with the individual himself. Self-government, for Gandhiji, was always first of all the individual's government of his own passions and desires and the formation of his own character. Not once but continuously he warned his fellow-countrymen that national liberty, the attainment of self-government for the nation, would avail them little or nothing unless the nation so liberated was made up of self-governing, controlled individuals. And that is precisely what Nai Talim is designed to produce, through the disciplined freedom of the school community.

There is, moreover, yet another aspect of Nai Talim which contributes to this. Until recent years and the advent of such educational pioneers as Madame Montessori, it was always taken for granted that some sort of incentive

in the form of rewards and prizes must be offered to children to make them do their school work—some sort of sugar coating for the bitter or tasteless pill of learning. As such prizes are inevitably competitive this has meant that the formative years of school life have been vitiated for generation after generation by the competitive spirit which, as Mr. Wells points out in the book already referred to, is the bane of the modern world and which will destroy civilization if not brought under control in time. How can war ever be driven out of a world whose inhabitants are systematically and from early childhood taught to regard others as their rivals instead of their brothers and *fellow-workers*? In Nai Talim the only reward for good work is the joy and satisfaction of learning something new, mastering a craft, beating one's own previous record, and being promoted to a higher class, where the work is harder and more exacting and the responsibilities heavier and more searching.

The outcome of such a system of education, is sufficiently widespread is quite incalculable. The difficulty of introducing it in a world in which the present adult generation, except for a few fortunate individuals, have all been brought up in the vicious old ways is too obvious to need comment. Gandhiji, however, like all the greatest sons of men, never despaired of human beings. Saturated as he himself was in the spirit and teaching of the Gita and the Sermon on the Mount, he knew of the possibilities inherent in men and women if they could only be led to practise the great teachings which they profess. But he knew also, none better, how difficult it is to change people in adult life and how comparatively easy it is to bring up children in better ways. And so he pinned his faith on children and a better way of education. Nothing he ever did or initiated reveals his supreme wisdom and understanding so clearly as this courageous attempt to revolutionise education as the surest road to peace.

## GANDHIJI AND WOMEN

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

GANDHIJI's contributions to Indian life and thought, indeed to world life and thought, have been many and varied. But women, in particular Indian women, owe him a special debt of gratitude.

It was but natural that the heart of a man who believed so firmly in Truth and Non-violence should go out in sympathy and understanding to all those who were oppressed or unjustly treated. It hurt him to think that woman whom he looked upon as 'the mother, maker and silent leader of man' should have so lost herself as to have become a mere chattel of man.

Gandhiji was uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. 'In my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality.' Those who tried to argue with him on the basis of what the great law-giver Manu is supposed to have said that 'for woman there can be no freedom' or what is contained in some texts in the Smritis met with scant attention. Such sayings or texts were not sacrosanct to him. They could 'command no respect from men who cherish the liberty of woman as their own and who regard her as the mother of the race.' He upbraided those who on behalf of orthodoxy resorted to quoting such texts as if they were part of religion. He recommended that some authoritative body should 'revise all that passes under the name of scriptures, expurgate all the texts that have no moral value or are contrary to the fundamentals of religion and morality and present such an edition for the guidance of Hindus'. While a Sanatanist Hindu in the highest sense of the term Gandhiji was wise and good and big enough to realize that 'the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life.' He, therefore, had no hesitation

in preaching in no uncertain terms, whether through the woman in the name of law, tradition and religion. To him even the slightest injustice was a form of violence and, therefore, an untruth. As he always maintained, Truth was impossible without Non-violence and equally the converse was true.

His indignant protests against enforced widowhood, in particular against the crime of child-widows, against the curse of child-marriage, against polygamy, against the sin of prostitution, against the cruelty of the pardah system, indeed against everything that militated against giving to with her co-partner in life, man, are there for all to read. He held that freedom and liberty to woman could in no sense be disruptive of all that was most precious in Indian culture and especially in feminine grace and modesty so peculiar to India's womanhood. In his own institutions and programme of work he paid equal attention and gave equal place to girls and women. There was an air of freedom and self-confidence in the girls and women that lived under his care whether at Sabarmati or at Sevagram which was a joy to behold and rarely visible in our society elsewhere. Nothing delighted him more than the success of women in any sphere of life. If ever he wished to elicit the opinions of his coworkers on any matters connected with the Asram or any new undertaking he paid equal attention and lent equal weight to the views of women workers.

There is no doubt that of all the factors that have contributed to the awakening of women in India the most potent has been the field of non-violent action which Gandhiji offered to women in his battle for India's political freedom. It brought them out in their hundreds from sheltered homes to stand the furnace of a fiery trial without flinching. They came well through the test and proved to the hilt that woman was capable of leadership and just as well able as man to resist evil or aggression. Their participation on equal terms with men in the freedom struggle gave woman a definite place so far as the salvation

of India was concerned and has been responsible for the trust reposed in them, on the advice and guidance of Gandhiji, by the leaders of the nation in the shape of positions of high office which have been entrusted to them. In India's new Constitution sex will not constitute a barrier of any kind in any sphere of life.

But while Gandhiji stood for equal status with man for woman he expected much from her too. The pamphlet on the Constructive Programme was written by him in the train from Sevagram to Bardoli in 1941. I remember so well saying to him at the time 'What a tragedy, isn't it, that the uplift of women has perforce to be one of the items?' With a sigh he replied 'It is a tragedy just as untouchability is a tragedy. But while I have always blamed men for considering themselves lords and masters of women instead of considering the latter as their friends and coworkers I do want to impress on you that your own sex is also greatly to blame for your present position.' The words 'surrender' or 'defeat' did not exist in his vocabulary because he believed that moral force was far superior to brute force. The Almighty had a wise purpose in all that He planned. Woman had been created the physically weaker vessel but by reason of that very weakness he held her to be innately superior to man in moral strength. 'Woman is more fitted than man to make explorations and take bolder action in *Ahimsa*. For the courage of self-sacrifice woman is any day superior to man as I believe man is to woman for the courage of the brute.' He never failed to stress that violence was against the fundamental nature of woman. But he sorrowed greatly that woman had become a slave to man simply because she failed to recognize her latent strength. 'Woman is the incarnation of *Ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love which again, means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the

sufferings caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who, again, suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world, thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in Satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.'

Perhaps nothing distressed Gandhiji more than the fact that whenever man resorted to war, whether on a large or on a small scale, he invariably became the slave of lust and women were his first victims. That violence must breed greater violence was as true as the fact that day follows night. But what worried him was the thought that woman fell an easy prey to man's brutality. It was his firm belief that woman had the power to die before she yielded her live body to man. 'I wish I could be a woman under such circumstances and try out whether I could successfully resist the brute in man', he once said to me. 'I believe it can be done'. In any event he was absolutely convinced that the weapons of war were not going to save her any more than they could save a nation against superior brute force. 'In my opinion it is degrading both for man and woman that woman should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end.' The women who celebrate his Jayanti this year will do well to ponder over these words. In a message to the women of Europe in 1932 Gandhiji quoted to them the example of Indian women who had come out in their thousands to take part in a non-violent struggle. That ideal may not be lost sight of by us if we are to remain true to him and his cause of world peace. 'If only women will forget that they belong to the weaker

sex, I have no doubt that they can do infinitely more than men against war. . . . .’ ‘If Europe will drink in the lesson of non-violence it will do so through its women.’

There was much opposition, even from amongst leaders of the women’s movements, to Gandhiji’s uncompromising attitude towards birth-control through contraceptives. His viewpoint was not due to any lack of sympathy on his part for the sufferings of women because of frequent child-bearing but because he was essentially their protector and was ever pointing to them, in particular, the higher way of life. Moral force and the chastity born of spirituality, were woman’s crowning glory. In plain language he believed that the only right use of the generative organ is to confine it solely to generation and that any other use was its abuse. It was man’s, and also woman’s supreme duty to stand for self-control as against self-indulgence and that was the surest recipe for birth-control. *Brahmacharya* for Gandhiji meant mastery of the Science of Life but he always admitted that it was perhaps the hardest thing for both man and woman to attain.

He told me once that when he gave the cult of khadi to India he had in mind the enormous contribution that women would make through it to India’s cause. Spinning was from time immemorial a special occupation of woman. ‘The spinning-wheel was ever the widow’s loving companion’. But more than a mere means of livelihood he looked upon spinning as a duty. This duty had not lessened because India had attained her political independence. Indeed it had increased. For him political independence meant nothing if it did not bring in its wake freedom from poverty, ignorance and disease, freedom from internecine strife and, above all, moral regeneration. In all these spheres he expected the largest contribution from women. ‘The economic and the moral salvation of India rests mainly with you,’ he said in his classic message ‘To the women of India in 1921’. ‘The future of India lies on your knees for you will nurture the future generation. You

can bring up the children of India to become simple, God-fearing and brave men and women or you can coddle them to be weaklings unfit to brave the storms of life.' And again 'to call woman the weaker sex is a libel: it is man's injustice to women. If by strength is meant brute strength then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women.'

There is no doubt from the quotations I have given—and I could go on multiplying them—and from the intimate association I had the rare privilege of having with Gandhiji over many years that no one knew and no one appreciated womankind better than he. Because of this appreciation he expected greatly from women also. His human voice is stilled in death but his teachings and his spirit abide. We can only pray that strength from on High may be vouchsafed to us so that we may be enabled to fulfil the high calling of our sex as Gandhiji understood and explained it to us.

## ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN

J. C. KUMARAPPA

MOST OF US reserve our ideals for a better world. Meta-physical concepts are for meditation. We may retire from this noisy and hedonistic world to contemplate on higher things. It was Gandhiji's mission to raise the dignity of man by getting 'His will done on earth as it is in heaven', to give a practical expression to his ideals.

The two concepts we most associate with Gandhiji are Truth and Non-violence. These did not remain abstract terms in the way he tried to interpret them. He found our lives steeped in untruth and violence. His mission was to purge our everyday life of these wherever met with. He was not content to explain the philosophic implications of Truth and Non-violence by learned discourses.

### AN INTERPRETATION

When a drunkard takes his earnings to the toddy shop and gets intoxicated it is easy to understand that there is violence and dishonesty in his deeds. His wife and children have a right to his earnings. He is depriving them of these and so there is dishonesty and untruth in it. He loses his rational life and so does violence to himself. A devotee of Truth and Non-violence, therefore, will work for prohibition to realize Truth and Non-violence in the daily life of the people.

It is in this way that everyone of the eighteen items on the Constructive Programme has come into existence as an expression of his ideals. Thus it is that Gandhiji brings his teachings into practice. This is his unique contribution.

Just as the drunkard introduces violence and untruth into his everyday life, everyone of us unconsciously becomes a party to a violent and untruthful life. It is not so easy

to see the beam in our own eyes as it is to see the mote in that of the drunkards.

We have got so accustomed to our humdrum life that we rarely stop to consider the normal consequences of each one of our acts. Some even resent that any moral values should be applied to economic transactions. One thing that distinguishes a man from brute beasts is ability to recognize rights and duties to his fellow creatures and understanding of spiritual and cultural values.

#### THE PLANE OF THE MONKEY

A monkey which goes into a fruit garden is only concerned with satisfying its own needs. It does not worry about the condition and labour that brought about the existence of that garden. It acts without any thought being bestowed on the antecedents which were necessary to bring into existence the supply. In the same way, when a man goes to a shop and buys an article without giving any thought to all that has gone into the manufacture of that article, he acts exactly on the same plane as the monkey. He loses his dignity as a rational human being and descends to that of the animal. It is the duty of every buyer to examine the conditions precedent because he succeeds to these and becomes responsible for them. We do recognize this sometimes in a limited way. If a child is murdered for its necklace and the ornament is offered for sale, most of us will decline to buy it purely on the basis of cheapness of it. We would hold that one who buys that necklace takes it along with the blood guilt of the seller. But this moral consideration is often relegated to the obvious incidents only and is not projected into every act of the common day.

#### A COMMON ACT

It is common knowledge that milk is mostly obtained from milkmen who neither allow enough for the calf nor even provide for their own children. They extract every drop

of milk from the cow, sell it away and perhaps give their children a little tea which is cheaper.

Let us examine the moral implications of this transaction, both as regards the milkman and his customer. He deprives the calf of its right and probably causes it to starve and die of malnutrition. In this he is guilty of both dishonesty and violence. He deprives his children of their due. Again he is both dishonest and violent, and cheats them of their rightful food—milk—and substitutes the stimulant—tea. This is the same sin repeated for the third time.

The customer who buys this milk takes over the guilt of the milkman, though he may not have performed the deed himself. If he buys it without thinking he descends to the level of brute beasts, and is in no way different from the self-centred monkey. The passing of money between the customer and the milkman makes no difference to the moral setting of the transaction.

#### SHIFTING OF CROPS

Many a poor farmer had been tempted by high prices to part with his land on which he had been cultivating food—say paddy. The purchaser then grows, may be cocoanut. This product is used to extract oil in mills from which soap may be manufactured. In such cases, after a few years the original farmer goes through the purchase money and is reduced to a field labourer. He gets, not his own paddy dehusked, but polished rice from the market. Thus he suffers from malnutrition, while no doubt the soap manufacturer nets in a good profit.

In this transaction there is dishonesty in that the short-sighted greed of the farmer is taken advantage of and he is induced to part with his land that has been providing him with a livelihood. This creates a shortage in the food supply of the community when the new crop of cocoanuts is used for making soap. This causes violence to the community also.

The unthinking buyer of soap, therefore, is saddled with these grave responsibilities. How many of us can plead 'not guilty'?

### WORKING OF MILLS

When the rice mills dehusk the paddy and polish the rice, they are depriving the people of the nutrition contained in the bran, pericarp, the germ, etc. as these are removed in the process. This again increases the malnutrition of the people and causes diseases and death. It is both dishonest and violent.

Similarly when the vegetable oils are converted into vanaspati the mills are depriving the oil of its nutritious qualities and introducing into the product elements that may be harmful to the consumer. The same is true of flour mills and sugar mills as they reduce the nutritive values of wheat and cane juice—the original material. Here again are simple examples from everyday life, which increase violence and untruth in our lives, to which both the mill-owner and the consumer become parties.

The farmers who supply their produce to such mills also are parties as they form an important link in the chain.

### FOREIGN TRADE

Articles that cross political boundaries are often part of commerce based on war. The Japanese trading rights in China, or British markets in India were results of armed conflicts. Every one who buys or sells goods which form part of their trade becomes a party to the conflict.

If Burma is held under political bondage for its petroleum and we use kerosene oil—a bye-product, we are sharing with the rulers of Burma in their aggression. There is violence and dishonesty in such a course. How many of us are conscious that the simple act of lighting a kerosene lantern makes us party to Imperialism?

CONCLUSION

If the projections of moral responsibilities land the producer, middleman and consumer in common guilt, what is the remedy?

Gandhiji's spiritual approach to life laid the guilt at everybody's door and showed that they are all tarred with the same brush. None of us can plead ignorance without being reduced to the plane of the brute beasts. How then shall we face this grave situation plunged in the violence and untruth of an economic organization which calls for the greatest destruction to be able to function at all? (America is budgetting this year eleven billion dollars for its army, navy and airforce—for its programme of destruction!)

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The solution offered by Gandhiji is perfectly simple. Use only goods manufactured within the range of your knowledge and by methods easily understood by you. This is the meaning of the programme of self-sufficiency through the organization of village and cottage industries prescribed by Gandhiji to meet the situation. This will not only absolve us from participating in the terrific violence and untruth that prevails in the present-day society but it will also lead the war-stricken world from destruction to the fuller realization of all that is noble in man. This offers the practical act that should follow our prayer 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven', and it is Gandhiji's attempt to bring heaven on earth.

## GANDHIJI AND DECENTRALIZATION OF POLITICAL POWER

NARAYAN AGARWAL

AFTER THE attainment of political freedom, India was faced with the problem of drafting a suitable constitution ; that Draft Constitution is now ready and it will be given a final shape by the concluding session of the Constituent Assembly in October. It must be conceded that the Constitution has been drafted by constitutional experts with hard and honest labour. They have tried their best to cull the best points of different modern constitutions of Britain, United States, Switzerland and a few other countries of the West. But the fact remains that the Draft Constitution is not Swadeshi ; it is not based on the essential indigenous traditions and culture. Administrative systems cannot and should not be transplanted; they are in the nature of an organic growth and must be evolved in conformity with the 'soul' of a nation. In the words of Sir John Marriott, 'constitutions are not exportable commodities'. The uniqueness of each nation must be preserved and developed in all phases of life. Virile and natural diversity is life ; dull and imitative uniformity is death. Unfortunately, this view-point has been overlooked by the framers of the Indian Constitution.

India is a very ancient land which has experimented with almost all types of imaginable constitutional structures during the last few thousand years. At a time when Europe and the New World had not even come within the pale of civilization, India had experimented with monarchy, autocracy, democracy, republicanism, and even anarchy. In his 'Hindu Polity', K. P. Jayaswal tells us of the Bhaujya, Svarājya, Vairājya, Rāshtrika and Arājaka constitutions in ancient India. India, therefore may be regarded as an old laboratory of constitutional development. To manufacture for her a mixture of Western constitutions, which are yet

in the melting pot, is an insult to her ancient culture and traditions. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean to suggest that we should be blind to the rich experience of Western countries. Far from it. But it is high time for us to realize that our sense of 'inferiority complex' must go and that we should now cultivate the habit of looking within.

I had the privilege of placing before the country about two years back a 'Gandhian Constitution for Free India' in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi. It is well-known that Gandhiji always stood for decentralization of economic and political power on the lines of the ancient Village Communities in this country. I, therefore, discussed the details of a Constitution for India in accordance with his ideals and conceptions. He was very kind enough to go through my draft twice and, suggested several amendments. To the final manuscript he wrote a Foreword remarking that the merit of my attempt consisted in the fact that I had done what for want of time he had failed to do. This Constitution was based on the fundamental principles of democracy, decentralization of political power and coordination of the numerous village republics into Taluka, District, Provincial and All India Panchayats. It is very gratifying to note that several Provincial Governments have generally accepted these principles by enacting suitable legislation in their respective areas. We must, however, note with regret that the Draft Constitution for Free India does not make even a passing reference to the principle of decentralized democracy which has been the fundamental basis of Indian polity since times immemorial. I had expressed this regret to Gandhiji about a month before his sudden assassination. Gandhiji replied in the columns of the 'Harijan', observing:

Principal Agarwal says that there is no mention or direction about village panchayats and decentralization in the foreshadowed Constitution. It is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention if our independence is to reflect the people's voice. The greater

the power of the panchayats, the better for the people.  
(*Harijan*, Dec. 21, 1947)

It would be absolutely wrong to think even for a moment that Gandhiji's ideas on decentralization of democracy are medieval and that panchayats were the relics of tribalism. In the 'Gandhian Constitution' I have tried to show how the ancient Indian ideal of *Gram Sabhas* is in line with the latest modern political thought in the Western countries. In the world to-day two types of political organizations have been experimented with—dictatorship and democracy. Dictatorship has and is bound to fail miserably because it curses both the dictator and the dictated: it smothers all human initiative and self-respect. As Bernard Shaw remarks, 'there is no hope for civilization in Government by idolized single individuals.'<sup>1</sup> The spectacular rise and fall of Mussolini and Hitler are glowing examples of the futility of arrogant dictatorships. The Totalitarianism of Soviet Russia is, we must admit, of a different type. But it is dictatorship all the same. If Russia is to attain lasting peace and prosperity she will have to establish what the originators of Communism desired a 'classless society' by making the State 'wither away'. This would be impossible of achievement without decentralizing political power on the widest scale.

Democracy is the other alternative. But modern democracy as evolved in the West cannot claim to be successful. The evils of vast constituencies and electioneering campaigns are now patent to everybody. Instead of democracy, we have what Gandhiji called 'Mobocracy'. The party system of parliamentary administration has been none too enviable. Moreover, the capitalist class has been paying the 'pipers' for calling tunes according to their liking and convenience. As Lord Bryce observes, 'democracy has no more persistent enemy than the money power.' The enemy is formidable because 'he works secretly by persuasion or

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<sup>1</sup> *Everybody's Political What's What?*, p. 341.

by deceit, rather by force and so takes men unawares.' As regards well-organized party caucuses, H. G. Wells remarks: 'Our present electoral method is a mere caricature of the representative government. It has produced upon both sides of the Atlantic, big, stupid and corrupt party machines.' The process of discussions in the Legislatures has become wholly unreal, the result of every important debate being almost a foregone conclusion dictated by the ruling party. The so-called representative Parliaments are, consequently, fast falling into public contempt as mere 'talking shops'.

If democracy is to survive, therefore, it must go the way of decentralization on the model of ancient rural republics in India. This does not mean that the old Panchayats could be revived exactly in the old form; that is neither possible nor desirable. Necessary changes will have to be effected to suit modern conditions. But Gandhiji was of the definite view that an ideal constitution whether for India or other countries must be based on the organization of well-knit and coordinated Village Communities with their positive and direct democracy, non-violent cottage economy and human contacts. 'If men's faith in social action is to be revived,' writes Prof. Joad, 'the State must be cut up and its functions distributed. He continues: 'It must be made possible for the individual to belong to a variety of small bodies possessing executive powers, dealing both with production and with local administration, as a member of which he can once again feel that he counts politically, that his will matters and that his work is really done for society. . . . It would seem, then, that the machinery of Government must be reduced in scale; it must be made manageable by being made local, so that, in seeing the concrete results of their political labours before them, men can be brought to realise that where self-government is a fact, society is malleable to their wills because society is themselves.' Another well-known political thinker, Prof. Cole observes:

Democracy is hostile to centralisation, for it is a spirit which wants freedom to manifest itself immediately and on the spot, wherever the need for the expression of a collective will arises. . . . To canalise it so as to make it flow into a single central channel, is to destroy its spontaneity, and to make it unreal.

According to Prof. Huxley, 'the political road to a better society is the road of decentralization and responsible self-government. Centralization of power results in curtailment of individual liberties and a progressive regimentation of the masses in countries hitherto enjoying a democratic form of government. Modern sociology also upholds the principle that 'man is happiest when living in small communities.' If we neglect this 'human factor' and do not create small homogeneous groups, points out Roy Glenday, all grandiose schemes for constructing a new world order are destined to founder. Prof. Adams, after analysing the shortcomings of modern democracies wants us 'to go to the root of the trouble and pursue a bold policy of devolution, of decentralization.' Prof. Harold Laski also favours decentralization because 'centralization makes for uniformity; it lacks the genius of time and place.' Lewis Mumford, the renowned American Sociologist, recommends the building up 'of small balanced communities in the open country.' Thus Mahatma Gandhi was indeed, in very good company in his forceful plea for decentralized democracy in the form of village panchayats. Of these ancient village republics, Sir Charles Metcalfe wrote in his minute of 1830:

The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; . . . . .but the village communities remain the same. . . . This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has,

I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence. I wish, therefore, that the village constitutions may never be disturbed and I dread everything that has a tendency to break them up.

But Fate willed it otherwise. The inordinate and unscrupulous greed of the East India Company caused gradual disintegration of these *Gram Sabhas*. The deliberate introduction of the Ryotwari System as against the Village Tenure System dealt a death blow to the corporate life of the village communities. The centralization of all executive and judicial powers in the hands of the District Magistrate deprived the village functionaries of their age-long powers and prestige.

Though not without drawbacks, the Indian village republics were remarkable experiments in genuine democracy and local self-government. The modern development of centralized control without sufficient local and corporate life has made politics barren and mechanical. There is also endless conflict between the interests of the individual and the State. But the ancient rural panchayats were successful in integrating these conflicting interests and made socio-political life human and real. They were free from most of the evils from which modern democracies suffer. Since 'money economy' was almost non-existent, the scope for bribery and corruption was next to nothing. Absence of organized and aggressive capitalism saved democracy from being 'pocketed'. In the small communities, elections were unanimous and spontaneous; those village elders who commanded universal respect were elected without wasting a single pie on 'electioneering'. Due to widest decentralization of political power, there was no chance of 'congestion' in parliamentary and legislative work in these village

assemblies. Indian democracy was, thus, direct, decentralized, virile, positive and real.

There is a fear that revival of the old type of decentralized democracy at present would give rise to endless factions and petty rivalries in village life. But we should not forget that the gram panchayats were in existence in this country even fifty years ago in working order. If they have been destroyed during the last four or five decades, they could again be revived, say within fifteen years. During these fifteen years, we must draw up a systematic plan for transferring political power to these rural republics in graded instalments. But our policy must be definite and not halting. If the ideal picture before us is clear, ten or fifteen years of transitional period in the life of an ancient nation like India do not matter. And, then, why should we express distrust among the masses? Swaraj is meant for them and we must trust their capacity to govern themselves. Trust begets trust. Even if they misgovern themselves, how can we withhold power from them? Did not the British Government advance the same argument against granting independence to us? Good government is, indeed, no substitute for self-government.

Will the nation respect Mahatma Gandhiji's plea for decentralization of political power among the numerous village communities? The wish of the Father of the Nation who was also the Architect of our Freedom, must be respected!

## A NOTE ON GANDHI

ALDOUS HUXLEY

GANDHIJI'S BODY was borne to the pyre on a weapons carrier. There were tanks and armoured cars in the funeral procession, and detachments of soldiers and police. Circling overhead were fighter planes of the Indian Air Force. All these instruments of violent coercion were paraded in honour of the apostle of non-violence and soul-force. It was an inevitable irony; for, by definition, a nation is a sovereign community possessing the means to make war on other sovereign communities. Consequently a national tribute to any individual—even if that individual be a Gandhi—must always and necessarily take the form of a display of military and coercive might.

Nearly forty years ago, in his *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi asked his compatriots what they meant by such phrases as 'Self-Government' and 'Home Rule'. Did they merely want a social organization of the kind then prevailing, but in the hands, not of English, but of Indian politicians and administrators? If so, their wish was merely to get rid of the tiger, while carefully preserving for themselves its tigerish nature. Or were they prepared to mean by 'swaraj' what Gandhi himself meant by it—the realization of the higher potentialities of Indian civilization by persons who had learnt to govern themselves individually and to undertake collective action in the spirit and by the methods of satyagraha?

In a world organized for war it was hard, it was all but impossible for India to choose any other course than that of becoming a nation like other nations. The men and women who had led the non-violent struggle against the foreign oppressor suddenly found themselves in control of a sovereign state equipped with the instruments of violent coercion. The ex-prisoners and ex-pacifists were trans-

formed overnight, whether they liked it or not, into jailers and generals.

The historical precedents offer little ground for optimism. When the Spanish colonies achieved their liberty as independent nations, what happened? Their new rulers raised armies and went to war with one another. In Europe Mazzini preached a nationalism that was idealistic and humanitarian. But when the victims of oppression won their freedom, they soon became aggressors and imperialists on their own account. It could scarcely have been otherwise. For the frame of reference within which one does one's thinking determines the nature of the conclusions, theoretical and practical, at which one arrives. Starting from Euclidean postulates one cannot fail to reach the conclusion that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. And starting from nationalistic postulates one cannot fail to arrive at armaments, war and increasing centralization of political and economic power.

Basic patterns of thought and feeling cannot be quickly changed. It will probably be a long time before the nationalistic frame of reference is replaced by a set of terms, in which men can do their political thinking non-nationalistically. But meanwhile technology advances with undiminished rapidity. It would normally take two generations, perhaps even two centuries, to overcome the mental inertia created by the ingrained habit of thinking nationalistically. Thanks to the application of scientific discoveries to the arts of war, we have only about two years in which to perform this herculean task. That it actually will be accomplished in so short a time seems, to say the least, exceedingly improbable.

Gandhi found himself involved in a struggle for national independence; but he always hoped to be able to transform it, first, by the substitution of satyagraha for violence and, second, by the application to social and economic life of the principles of decentralization. Upto the present his hopes have not been realized. The new nation resembles

other nations inasmuch as it is equipped with the instruments of violent coercion. Moreover the plans for its economic development aim at the creation of a highly industrialized state, complete with great factories under capitalistic or governmental control, increasing centralization of power, a rising standard of living and also no doubt (as in all other highly industrialized states,) a rising incidence of neuroses and incapacitating psycho-somatic disorders. Gandhi succeeded in ridding his country of the alien tiger; but he failed in his attempts to modify the essentially tigerish nature of nationalism as such. Must we therefore despair? I think not. The pressure of fact is painful and, we may hope, finally irresistible. Sooner or later it will be realized that this dreamer had his feet firmly planted on the ground, that this idealist was the most practical of men. For Gandhi's social and economic ideas are based upon a realistic appraisal of man's nature and the nature of his position in the universe. He knew, on the one hand, that the cumulative triumphs of advancing organization and progressive technology cannot alter the basic fact that man is an animal of no great size and, in most cases, of very modest abilities. And, on the other hand, he knew that these physical and intellectual limitations are compatible with a practically infinite capacity for spiritual progress. The mistake of most of Gandhi's contemporaries was to suppose that technology and organization could turn the petty human animal into a superhuman being and could provide a substitute for the infinities of a spiritual realization, whose very existence it had become orthodox to deny.

For this amphibious being on the border-line between the animal and the spiritual, what sort of social, political and economic arrangements are the most appropriate? To this question Gandhi gave a simple and eminently sensible answer. Men, he said, should do their actual living and working in communities of a size commensurate with their bodily and mental stature, communities small enough to permit of genuine self-government and the assumption of

personal responsibilities, federated into large units in such a way that the temptation to abuse great power should not arise. The larger a democracy grows, the less real becomes the rule of the people and the smaller is the say of individuals and localized groups in deciding their own destinies. Moreover love and affection are essentially personal relationships. Consequently it is only in small groups that Charity, in the Pauline sense of the word, can manifest itself. Needless to say, the smallness of the group in no way guarantees the emergence of Charity between its members; but it does at least create the possibility of Charity. In a large, undifferentiated group the possibility does not even exist, for the simple reason that most of its members cannot, in the nature of things, have personal relations with one another. 'He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.' Charity is at once the means and the end of spirituality. A social organization so contrived that, over a large field of human activity, it makes the manifestation of Charity impossible, is obviously a bad organization.

Decentralization in economics must go hand in hand with decentralization in politics. Individuals, families and small co-operative groups should own the land and instruments necessary for their own subsistence and for supplying a local market. Among these necessary instruments of production Gandhi wished to include only hand tools. Other decentralists—and I for one would agree with them—can see no objection to power-driven machinery provided it be on a scale commensurate with individuals and small co-operative groups. The making of these power-driven machines, would, of course, require to be carried out in large, highly specialised factories. To provide individuals and small groups with the mechanical means of creating abundance, perhaps one-third of all production would have to be carried out in such factories. This does not seem too high a price to pay for combining decentralization with mechanical efficiency. Too much mechanical efficiency is the enemy of liberty because it leads to regimentation and the loss of sponta-

neity. Too little efficiency is also the enemy of liberty, because it results in chronic poverty and anarchy. Between the two extremes there is a happy mean, a point at which we can enjoy the most important advantages of modern technology at a social and psychological price which is not excessive.

It is interesting to recall that, if the great apostle of Western democracy had had his way, America would now be a federation, not merely of forty-eight states, but of many thousands of self-governing wards. To the end of a long life Jefferson tried to persuade his compatriots to decentralize their government to the limit. 'As Cato concluded every speech with the words, *Carthago delenda est*, so do I every opinion with the injunction, 'Divide the countries into wards'. His aim, in the words of Professor John Dewey, 'was to make the wards 'little republics, with a warden at the head of each, for all those concerns which being under their eye, they could better manage than the larger republics of the country or State. . . .In short they were to exercise directly, with respect to their own affairs, all the functions of government, civil and military. In addition, when any important wider matter came up for decision, all wards would be called into meeting on the same day, so that the collective sense of the whole people would be produced. The plan was not adopted. But it was an essential part of Jefferson's political philosophy.' And it was an essential part of his political philosophy, because that philosophy, like Gandhi's philosophy, was essentially ethical and religious. In his view, all human beings are born equal, inasmuch as all are the children of God. Being the children of God, they have certain rights and certain responsibilities—rights and responsibilities which can be exercised most effectively within an hierarchy of self-governing republics, rising from the ward through the State to the Federation.

'Other days,' writes Professor Dewey, 'bring other words and other opinions behind the words that are used. The

terms in which Jefferson expressed his belief in the moral criterion for judging all political arrangements and his belief that republican institutions are the only ones that are legitimate are not now current. It is doubtful, however, whether defense of democracy against the attacks to which it is subjected does not depend upon taking once more the position Jefferson took about its moral basis and purpose, even though we have to find another set of words in which to formulate the moral ideal served by democracy. A renewal of faith in common human nature, in its potentialities in general and in its power in particular to respond to reason and truth, is a surer bulwark against totalitarianism than is demonstration of material success or devout worship of special legal and political forms.'

Gandhi, like Jefferson, thought of politics in moral and religious terms. That is why his proposed solution bears so close a resemblance to those proposed by the great American. That he went further than Jefferson—for example, in recommending economic as well as political decentralization and in advocating the use of satyagraha in place of the ward's 'elementary exercises of militia'—is due to the fact that his ethics was more radical and his religion more profoundly realistic than Jefferson's. Jefferson's plan was not adopted; nor was Gandhi's. So much the worse for us and our descendants.

## FINLAND AND NON-VIOLENCE

HORACE ALEXANDER

ONE OF THE countries in which a nation-wide campaign of non-violent resistance to oppression has been at the beginning of this century is too little known. Perhaps it should be classified, in Gandhian language, as 'non-violence of the weak', but the story of the struggle suggests that 'non-violence of the weak' may lead at least some participants to become convinced believers in the principle of non-violence; through practising non-violence the weak may become strong.

In what follows I am indebted to Deryck Sevin, who has recently written an interesting paper on this subject. Unfortunately it is too long to publish in full, but in places I quote him word for word.

For five hundred years Finland was part of the Swedish Empire, and during that time the people of Finland had the same political rights as Swedes. Then, following a series of wars between Russia and Sweden, Russia annexed Finland at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Finland, however, retained her autonomy throughout the nineteenth century, and her political and social progress was remarkable.

It was in 1898 that a new Governor-General was appointed, with instructions to Russify the country. When he issued an Edict annulling Finland's free constitution, no less than half a million people (nearly a quarter of the total population) signed an appeal to the Tsar, which was taken to St. Petersburg by a delegation of five hundred. The Tsar refused to receive them. Thus, the resistance began.

When Russian laws were introduced, superseding Finnish law, the judges refused to enforce the law, and many were removed from their posts. Pilots of ships were obliged to

use the Russian language, but they refused; so Russians were brought in to replace the Finnish pilots, but the Russians did not know the river channels, and many Russian ships were wrecked. The Russian language was made compulsory in all schools, but the children, encouraged by parents and teachers, refused to learn it.

In 1901, compulsory military service was decreed for Finland. Nearly all the young men refused to serve, and many fled away into the forests or even went into exile and emigrated to America. The resistance to military service was so successful that, after three years, the Russian Government abandoned it, and levied a small military tax instead.

In 1903 the Governor-General was given full dictatorial powers. He dismissed and exiled without trial all officials who opposed the measures of Russification. Judges and other leading men were sent to Siberia or thrown into Russian prisons. Some leading Finns went into exile and wrote articles in the foreign press about Russian oppression. This led to widespread hostility towards Russia, and the Government found difficulty in raising foreign loans.

The Russian authorities then had to resort to the clever tactic of employing 'agents provocateurs'. In Finland, as in other countries, the oppressing Government found it much easier to suppress a movement that resorted to outbreaks of violence than one that remained strictly non-violent. Down to 1917, when the Revolution occurred in Russia, the spirit of Finnish resistance was never wholly broken or crushed, but the ruthless repression that followed acts of violence instigated by agents provocateurs seems to have had a demoralising effect. The unity of the resistance was broken. Finland was broken into different parties, the seeds were sown of the terrible civil strife that followed a few years later.

After the assassination of the Russian tyrant Bobrikov, in 1904, the two wings of the resistance movement, violent and non-violent, becomes more and more alienated from

one another. The assassination, says Deryck Sevin, 'did not harm the oppressors as much as it did the resistance movement. . . . Under these circumstances, passive resistance was bound to fail, because, for a complete success of non-violent resistance, complete solidarity is required, and, secondly, it is essential that it be not conveyed in a spirit of hatred.'

During these years, however, an important new feature was the founding of the Finnish Peace Society. It is not violent resistance, and the need to work out a philosophy that would justify such action, or how far it was a reaction to Tolstoyan and other teachings that were spreading all over Europe in the early years of this century. Probably it was chiefly under the latter, not the former, influence. From the year 1903 onwards, individual Finns, influenced by Tolstoy, refused military service not only on political but on fundamentally religious and moral grounds; whilst the Peace Society was founded in 1907. For the next six years the Society carried on active propaganda against all war and fighting, but in 1913 it was suppressed by the Russian Governor-General 'who feared more the moral force of the pacifists than he did the activists'.

Although the independence of Finland was recognized in January 1918 by the new Government in Russia, the history of the thirty years that have since elapsed is a history of disappointment and frustration, which makes a sad contrast to the progressive history of Finland in the nineteenth century.

For the first few months, Finland was torn by civil war between whites and reds; in April, 1918, German forces landed in South-West Finland, and with their assistance the whites were soon victorious, and the reds were crushed. 'When the war was over, there were 90,000 Red prisoners starving in concentration camps. About 15,000 of these were executed, and 12,000 died of malnutrition or ill-treatment; the others were released after some time, but this brothers' war left terrible marks in the hearts of the

Finnish people. It left a heritage of hatred among widows and some 20,000 orphans which was worse than the bloodshed and sufferings in themselves.'

For the next twenty years Finland was perhaps more bitterly anti-Russian than any other country in Europe. Hatred of Russia was taught in the schools; social policy was reactionary in many respects and the army looked to Germany for support against the hated enemy to the East. In 1937 the left parties won at the elections, but it was too late to change the whole character of Finnish foreign policy.

Since 1939 Finland has fought in three wars, twice against Russia and then, in order to redeem her character in the eyes of the victorious Allies, against Germany. These wars have meant the loss of at least ten per cent of her young manhood, loss of large pieces of territory, terrible economic dislocation, the devastation of the northern province of Lapland, a heavy burden of reparation payments imposed by Russia, and other losses and burdens grievous to be born.

But the spirit of Finland lives, and there are signs that some at least of her people have taken to heart the lesson of these terrible sufferings. The history of Finland reminds one of the history of Palestine thousands of years ago. The Bible land of Palestine was set between the great powers of Assyria and Egypt, and worldly wise Kings and statesmen of Palestine sought to ally themselves with one or other of these great powers, in order to receive protection from the aggression of the other. Their policy, in fact, was dictated by fear. Then came the great prophets, Isaiah, Micah, Amos and the rest, and said: 'Put not your trust in alliances or in armed might, but trust in the living God', or, in other words, 'live righteously, destroy injustice in your midst, live courageously, and God will give you all the protection that you need'.

Just before I visited Finland last summer (1948) a Swedish friend said to me: 'The Finns have lived beside their fear so long that they have overcome it'. They know quite

well that they live at the mercy of Russia. Neither a conquered Germany nor a far away America can save them. They must find their salvation within themselves. And so they are turning to the living God ; or in modern language, they are trying to build up a new national life on foundations of righteousness and justice. Some that I met are hard at work trying to bring about what they call 'the Christian Revolution': social justice and well-being for all, but without violence or hatred even against the former oppressors.

Deryck Sevin explains that the purpose of his paper has been 'to show how a small nation successfully defied a world power as long as it put its trust in the righteousness of its cause and used non-violent means in the defence of right, and how the spirit of violence and trust in the powerful German war-machine led to enormous disaster for the Finnish people when it was led by ambitious politicians into a war of conquest.'

In his conclusion, Deryck Sevin writes: 'I do not believe in non-violence because religious leaders have proclaimed it, but I do believe that they have proclaimed it because it is divine truth. . . . Pacifism must not be a dead theory about abolition of war. It is a faith which has to influence the way of life of its adherents. The evils of our national and international life are the results of our inner spiritual defects, wherefore every real peace movement must start in our own hearts . . . God can only use those who are filled with faith in man, hope for a new and better world, and love toward everything created as his tools in promoting his plans for the future of mankind'.

The Jews of old rejected the warnings of their prophets, and put their trust in policies based on fear and prudence and worldly wisdom. But to-day the truths proclaimed by those prophets still ring out across the centuries, whilst the might of Assyria and Babylon, of Egypt and Rome, are buried in the dust. Will the nations of to-day follow the courageous lead of their modern prophets, of Tolstoy and

Gandhi, or shall we in our turn prefer the counsels of worldly wisdom, which sooner or later end in ruin and destruction?

# WORLD GOVERNMENT

ARTHUR MOORE

WORLD GOVERNMENT can come about in two ways, and be of two forms.

The first way is by conquest, and in such an event the form would probably be a unitary Government.

The second way would be by agreement between sovereign states to delegate some of their sovereign powers to a world state, the Government of which would thereafter derive its mandates from the sovereign will of the people of the world. The form in such an event would be a federal Government.

The first way has been the dream of conquerors throughout the ages. Alexander, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, Timurlane, Napoleon, Hitler have all dreamt this dream. None achieved the reality, though several became the dominating figures in the known world. None left a kingdom or empire which was not rent with war or divided up immediately after the conqueror's death. The last two would-be conquerors, Napoleon and Hitler, met defeat ; one died a prisoner, the other by his own hand.

Religion as well as military glory has inspired dreams of world conquest, the aim being to set up a theocracy. Some such idea underlay the Christian Crusades which covered a period of two hundred years and led kings to 'take the Cross'. The Crusades had their opposite number in the Khilafat and the Arab-Turkish combination which overran Northern Africa and Spain, entered France and Italy, and later conquered Eastern Europe, and carried Islam to the gates of Vienna.

The idea of world government by conquest is not dead, but the military glory phase and the theocratic phase seem to be yielding place to an 'ideological' phase. Many now advocate and work for a world dictatorship and claim that

on economic grounds it is a necessity. They hold that by no other means can the money power of capital be broken and the wage earners be delivered from economic slavery. Political freedoms, such as free speech, free thought, and a free Press they consider of secondary importance to economic freedom, and they deride these supposed political freedoms under the capitalist system as illusory, on the ground that in the last resort the money power controls the Press and corrupts the electors and the elected. In so far as freedom is genuine, for example adult suffrage and free primary education, the workers, having become conscious of their power when united, have wrested it from the money powers; therefore—so say the ideological *conquistadores*—force is justified. But the ideological phase of the movement for world government is not national. In so far as it is orthodox it predicates class war, and demands violent revolutions and civil wars rather than international wars. It has some kinship with the theocratic phase, but differs in that religious fanaticism did not look to find world-wide support. It visualised a world conquered for Cross or Crescent by believer nations overrunning unbelieving peoples.

Of recent years a new movement has sprung up and is already world-wide. It favours the second way;—an agreement between sovereign states to delegate some of their sovereign powers to a world federal state. A federal Government literally means a Government based on a treaty, (Latin *foedus*), and it derives its initial authority from a series of treaties between sovereign states, by which they agree to vest a portion of their sovereign rights in a new governmental organ representing them all.

The rapid growth of the new movement is due to the total nature of modern war, which abolishes the distinction between soldiers and civilians, makes all liable to compulsory service and exposes them to comparable risks. Also, instead of involving merely the lives of a comparatively few professional soldiers it causes the destruction of civilian property and wealth on a ruinous scale. The civilian

world was formerly roughly divided into those who tolerated soldiers in peace time and cheered them in war time and those who regarded them as brutal and licentious people who had not even the brains to make fortunes out of war as civilians did, and were too stupid to see that they were being used as cannon fodder. All alike are to-day horrified at the inhumanity and unreason of the kind of war the bombing aeroplane has made possible.

The success of federations in removing the possibility of war between states that once eyed each other with continual jealousy and suspicion, and had to maintain armies in readiness to fight each other, and employ spies and secret agents to check up on each other's plans, could not escape the notice of thoughtful men. The United States of America produced peace between a group of ill-assorted and unfriendly states, and its success has attracted so many adhesions from Spanish, French, and Mexican territories as well as from new states that the original thirteen are now multiplied by four. Canada and Australia have followed the same path, and in Europe in the nineteenth century the German Empire by federal process established a great area of internal peace and prosperity where there had previously been recurring wars. But as federal states grew in size wars in which they were involved became more total and terrible, and the war of 1914-1918 forced the world to consider how to end war. The principle of sovereignty still ruled so strongly that a World Government was not thought of. Instead there emerged the impotent League of Nations. When this became an obvious failure, confronted with the aggressive policies in turn of Japan, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, the road to World War II lay open. The causes were already visible, namely the powerful armaments at the disposal of separate hostile nations and the absence of an over-riding federal authority with a force incomparably superior to the forces allowed to member states, and in sole command of the air.

A personal digression, to illustrate the growth of the

federal idea, may be permitted. Between the two wars Lord Davies founded the New Commonwealth, a propagandist society the object of which was the creation of an international air force to be the arm of the League of Nations. This appealed to me, as in 1919 before my demobilisation and while the peace treaties and the Covenant of the League of Nations were still under discussion at Versailles I had, under the anonymous cloak of 'A Military Pilot' contributed to Mr. Leonard Woolf's monthly 'The International Review' an article urging that all national air forces should be forbidden by the League and that it should have the only combatant air arm, a truly international force charged with the high mission of keeping the world's peace. Though an advocate of federation in the British Commonwealth, I had got no further than armed League of Nations in my thinking till the summer of 1938, when I spent some months of leave from India in France and England. It has long been clear to me that Britain's policy of appeasing Hitler and Mussolini encouraged those aggressors, and would produce a war by bringing their aggression to a point at which the British people would veto all attempts at further appeasement. In the columns of the *Statesman*, of which I was the editor, I had felt it my duty to criticise Mr. Chamberlain's policy of 'patting the tiger'. During my leave the Munich crisis arose, and I was present as an onlooker at all the crisis debates in the House of Commons. In the debate after his meeting with Hitler at Godesberg I saw the message handed to the Prime Minister while he was speaking, whereupon he joyfully announced that the Fuhrer proposed another meeting and that he would be going to Munich. I saw the crowds that greeted him when he returned announcing that he had brought back 'Peace'; and I was present at the final debate.

No public event before or since has ever made me so acutely miserable and ashamed. The unrestrained rejoicings and Saturday night celebrations of 'peace' that followed completed my unhappiness. For days I roamed the London

streets lost in the contemplation of the horror or inevitable war, for I knew that the people, though now misled, would not permit the further shame of repudiating the new obligations to defend Poland, Hungary, and Rumania which Britain, with no visible means of fulfilling them, had now imposed upon herself.

That Hitler and Mussolini would ultimately be defeated I never doubted; but how were we to get the necessary strength, how to overcome weakness through Indian unrest and the German sympathies of the dissident Dutch in Africa? And how were we to get permanent peace at the end of all? Those who so lightmindedly were celebrating peace with Germany and Italy now would be sure to swing to the opposite extreme in war. They would be the loudest in their execration of Germans and Italians; they would want vengeance rather than a just peace and might repeat the follies the Allies had committed in their treatment of the Weimar republic.

These thoughts beset me hard, and after many days an answer suddenly came as though it were a voice speaking to me. It brought no relief, for the certainty of a coming terrible war remained, but it spoke of the end of war through the building up of federations, and the merging of these in some ultimate world federation which would keep the world's peace. At the same time it spoke of the solution of the struggle between capitalism and socialism by the methods of consumer cooperation, which by its own natural and irresistible growth must inevitably outdistance any other economic system.

Three weeks after 'Munich', on October 20, 1938 I grasped a pen and wrote down the words 'Federate or Perish!' as though I were an automaton. This was the heading to a letter which I sent the same day to a London paper, to the leading provincial papers and to papers in Indian provincial capital cities. The London editor courteously replied that he realized the importance of the subject but that he felt that its treatment was too far

advanced for public opinion. The *Manchester Guardian*, *Yorkshire Post*, and the other provincial papers gave the letter great prominence and published it under the double column heading 'Federate or Perish', and a week later all the Indian papers gave it under the same heading. I followed it up in many leading articles in the ensuing years, and also addressed numerous meetings. It was soon evident that the idea appealed strongly to the Indian mind. Congress leaders began to refer to it in their speeches and to explain that though they claimed complete independence of Britain they would be willing to enter a world federation. I discussed the idea with Mahatma Gandhi who said that to him it was entirely novel, but he accepted it at once as the true ideal. In 1942 World Government appeared in the election manifesto of the Congress, and in the 1946 elections this was repeated.

Meanwhile the same ferment was working in the mind of an American journalist. In November 1938, i.e. soon after 'Munich', I addressed the Indian Institute of International affairs on the subject and the Institute circulated the address abroad in pamphlet form. At Chatham House, the London headquarters, Lionel Curtis, who had long had the vision of a worldwide *Civitas Dei*, read it, and as he was then in touch with Clarence Streit, who was writing a book (*Union Now*) designed to bring the idea of an Atlantic Union into practical politics, he sent on to me the proofs of Streit's book as soon as they reached him. The result was that when *Union Now* appeared early in the following year I was in a position to bring it prominently to the notice of the Indian public on the date of publication. *Union Now* had a remarkable influence on American and British public opinion. But for it, it is possible that Mr. Churchill's famous offer of common citizenship to France would not have been made, and to-day Streit's idea of an Atlantic Union is being vigorously revived. In Canada Mr. Saint Laurent advocates it strongly. In 1941 Streit followed up his first book with *Union Now-with Britain*, and I had

the pleasure of carrying the proofs of the American edition across the Atlantic to his London publisher.

*Union Now* produced a British Society, 'Federal Union', which has become a powerful organization, and its membership, which includes a large number of M.P.s grows continually. The book's influence has also been visible in the creation of many societies in America, France, Belgium, Holland, the Scandinavian countries and Italy. To federalists the need for a federation of societies working for the same objects soon became obvious, and an international conference with this end in view was held at Luxembourg in October 1946. From India Lieutenant (now Brigadier) Mangat Rai and I attended, and did our best to remind an assemblage obsessed with fear of a fresh devastation of Europe of the existence of Asia. Two combinations resulted from the conference, one for the promotion of a world federation the other for a European union; both have now a common permanent secretariat at 10, Rue Diday, Geneva. A conference was held at Montreux in 1947, and this year's meeting has just taken place in Luxembourg. Its special importance was that it discussed a practical plan put forward by a group of British M.P.s for holding in every country a nation-wide ballot in 1950 to elect representatives to World Constituent Assembly, on a basis of one representative for every million inhabitants. The Assembly would aim at producing a federal constitution by 1952 for ratification by the Parliaments of the world. In Britain more than seventy M.P.s are associated with this proposal and distinguished figures such as Lord Beveridge and Sir John Boyd-Orr are already electioneering as candidates for the Constituent Assembly. Groups are actively at work in the U.S.A, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and Switzerland. From America Mr. Edward Clark this year undertook a world tour to spread the idea. During his visit to India he had a meeting with Pandit Nehru who wrote him, for publication, a letter cordially supporting the cause of world federation, without commitment to

the particular scheme. In view however of the representation on a population basis and the support the scheme is receiving elsewhere it is of the utmost importance that Indian Parliamentary delegates should be present at international meetings. If India is to be represented by 300 delegates to a Constituent Assembly in 1950, clearly a vast amount of work will have to be done first, and intensive organization and large funds will be required. It is unfortunate that owing to internal events and a series of mishaps it proved impossible to organize a Parliamentary group and a propagandist society in time to send a delegation to the Luxembourg Conference. Seth Dalmia attended it in a personal capacity. He has hitherto advocated a purely unitary type of Government, though how national Governments of peoples differing in race, language, and religion are to be induced to give way to what would in effect be a dictatorship he has not made clear. It is possible that the Luxembourg experience may have converted him to federalism.

It is a paradoxical situation that although the Government of India, and in particular her Prime Minister, have made clearer and more emphatic declarations than any other Government in the world on the importance of world federation and although politically minded India is more attuned to the idea than the European public, India remains still without a proper organization to carry on popular propaganda and to ensure that India's voice shall be heard at every formative stage in international discussions.

Mr. B. Shiva Rao, 4 Hardinge Avenue, New Delhi, will act as convener to the Parliamentary Group which it is now hoped to form. Provincial Parliamentary Groups are also a necessity if India is to be ready to play her part by 1950.

# POLITICS AND MORALITY

G. STEPHENS SPINKS

## I

THERE IS A sense in which politics and morality are one. But they achieve this identity in action, not in definition, and only then in the lives of certain outstanding individuals. In the abstract, politics is the science of government; morality is concerned with the distinction between right and wrong (ignoring for the purpose of this article questions as to the ultimate sanctions involved within this distinction). For the Western world our thought about morals and politics has been moulded by two far-reaching influences, the philosophy of Plato and that part of the New Testament which is called 'The Sermon on the Mount.' But these are not just literary influences. The influence of these two quite dissimilar literary texts arises not so much from the profundity of their thought as from their strong personal aspects. In the West our respect for Plato is heightened by the memory of the life and death of his master, Socrates. In the same way we read the Sermon on the Mount with the life and death of Jesus in our minds. And herein we perceive a fundamental truth about politics and morality. They become one only in his life of a living person. By definition they are not one; but in the life of a single consecrated being they establish an overwhelmingly powerful unity.

Morality is of two kinds (however many other classifications the moral philosophers may care to make.) First, there is the morality of custom, habit and established law—the morality of the mass of people living together in one time and place. It is a morality dictated by the minimum requirements of social intercourse. Without some such regulation, imposed and accepted, society would not be possible. But this is largely a neutral morality. It tends

always to be static, to be opposed to any development of the moral sense that might disturb the established order of long accepted custom. The second kind of morality is progressive—and this is the only kind of morality that is really moral. The truly moral life is a continuous attempt not only to be better than has been done before, but also to enlarge the area of action over which the distinction between Right and Wrong applies. The morality of custom (without which no society could be maintained) is the morality which attempts to maintain, but not surpass, the standards reached in the common life of a society. Innovation, departure, development have no place in the morality of custom. Yet, such is the paradox of the moral life, unless custom is challenged, custom itself becomes tyranny, denying even the virtues it exists to maintain, and ceasing to be moral even in a neutral sense. Progressive morality calls, therefore, for the innovator, the prophet and the saint. And the main field in which the moral innovator can work, is the field of social relationships—in a word, politics. Morality to be progressive must work in a political context because politics now invades every part of our life.

In this short article written in honour of Mahatma Gandhi, I am not, therefore, called upon to decide how much there was of the political opportunist and how much there was of the saint in the life of the Mahatma. That is a question which in the West has been discussed at great length and not without some intensity of feeling. But as soon as one looks at Gandhi as the innovator, the man whose morality was progressive, we can see the truth of the statement that morality and politics are identical only in the life of a living person. I doubt very much whether Gandhi in his own life ever made any absolute distinction between politics and morality. His struggle for the one involved an unceasing attempt to better the conditions of living for millions of men and women; his struggle for the other involved the heightening of the distinction between Right and Wrong those upon whom the lives of these same

millions depended. And—paradoxical as it must appear in a civilization where more and more the physical well-being of the individual depends upon the efficient interference of the State—the only way the State can be made to perform its functions of providing the conditions of moral living for the millions under its care, is for it to receive the repeated challenge of the morally progressive individual.

Mahatma Gandhi represented the challenge of a supremely progressive moral person to the whole structure of an industrialized society. Such a challenge is not unique. But when it exists in a personality having the strength and complete self-abnegation of the Mahatma, then the course of history is changed; and changed in the only way that change is morally justified, for the better.

The moral progress of the world depends upon there arising ever so often, a number of men who will change the self-sufficiency of custom hardening into political tyranny, into the progressive morality of an awakened social conscience. This can be done only by the saint. A saint—whatever ecclesiastical definitions may exist to the contrary is a consecrated personality whose morality is of such a kind that it opposes to the morality of custom the vision of a better order of society. And because his vision appears to be so far ahead of the morality of existing social custom, the morality of the saint always appears to be impracticable to his contemporaries. Here in the West, the question has often been asked since the war came to an end in the East with the surrender of Japan, 'What would have happened to the peoples of India, if Mr. Gandhi had been allowed to have his saintly way of non-resistance to the Japanese invader?' There is no answer to that question because it is purely hypothetical. The morality of empires, whether American, British, Russian or Japanese, is never the morality of saints; if it were there would be no empires and no saints, for society would then have attained to that level of moral perfection where every man would be an empire and a saint at one and the same time.

## II

Those who control the political fortunes of a country are never able to be completely moral. Political life is a conflict between the highest known moral law and the demands of expediency. And this conflict between morality and expediency is at the root of our social and political crisis. It is a conflict, endemic in all forms of society, whether of the East or of the West, between those who feel that the end justifies the means, and those who feel that the means profoundly influences and can sometimes nullify the desired end. To-day the whole of political controversy is a debate between those who believe man to be a cog in an impersonal process (whether economic, historical or dialectical) and those who believe that man is an end in himself.

The moral saint is committed to the belief that man is to be treated as an end in himself, whether he is an Indian working in South Africa, a Jew in a Ghetto, a negro in America, an unemployed worker in a capitalist system, or a dissenting intellectual in a communist state. To those who use the methods of expediency (and most of us do) the 'political' programmes of moral saints are never practicable. For most of us the spinning wheel of Mahatma Gandhi was a symbol, not a solution. But there are times when symbols, whether they are spinning wheels, or hammers and sickles, are more powerful than the best equipped means of industrial production.

Symbols when they are employed by moral saints become weapons of more than physical potency. This potency arises from the appeal which a good man makes to men who are not good, but in whom there exists (the doctrine of the perfectibility of all men) a deep-seated desire to be good, the urge which all men possess in some degree to be saints. If there were no such desire we could never explain the power of saints all the way down the ages to attract to themselves lesser men who, without the saint, would never *on their own initiative* have attempted to reach to some higher level of the spiritual life. For whatever else politics

exist to do, their highest function is to make living conditions such that ordinary men and women find it possible to become moral personalities. Saints, of course, do not wait for some such easing of the social condition; they wrest their sainthood out of the intractable stuff of social inertia and opposition. We shall never understand the place of the great moral saints in history if we do not face the fact that they make the opposition of their time the condition of their success. Desiring that the poor and oppressed millions should share in the abundant things of the earth, be freed from the limitations of social injustice and every form of slavery, ancient or modern, they themselves have worked to make such things possible by adopting what is perhaps the most extraordinary of all techniques. Desiring that all men should share in the good things of life, they have themselves carried their plan to triumph by a singular personal disregard of the material things of life. The great saints of the East and of the West, have been the men who turned their world upside down by treating the treasure houses of their time as of no more value than a dunghill.

They are the men who have influenced the politics of their time for good by the irresistible technique of repudiating the values which all lesser men have held dear—money, security, fame and admiration. By so doing they have rendered all those who opposed them importent to harm them. Persecution, prison and death cannot conquer the saint whose only weapon is renunciation and an unshakeable adherence to the Good. Against that the gates of hell cannot prevail.

### III

The contribution of Mr. Gandhi is very difficult to assess in terms of actual political results. The question of Indian labour in South Africa is still unanswered. The division of all India into two dominions—a division taken in direct opposition to the Mahatma's own wishes and the violence

which increasingly distinguishes the re-awakening nationalism of the Far East make it difficult to assess in short-term results the effect of the identification of morality and politics in the Mahatma's life. But there is another aspect of this matter, one which is perhaps, more important than the actual political results visible at the moment. It is this. A saint is a person who gathers up in himself, incarnates as it were in a single life, the inarticulate wishes, the unexpressed, unformulated longings of millions of depressed men and women, no single one of whom on his own responsibility would have been brave enough, clear enough in thought, or consistent enough in action to have brought his sense of moral frustration to the point of public protest.

There is a sense in which the saint (the moral saint as distinct from the isolated contemplative saint) becomes the medium, the only medium sufficiently disinterested to speak for millions without becoming either a demagogue or a dictator. For all these millions the moral saint becomes the indispensable condition of the positive moral progress of large masses of mankind. Without him they would have dared nothing. With him they are able to attempt the practice of that moral self-restraint, that non-resistance against which even the technique of modern war is halted. In his own life the saint puts on the morality which all men would practise, but which in fact, without a living example, the ordinary sensual man never or rarely does put on.

In a sense Mr. Gandhi was the vicarious conscience of earth's dumb, depressed millions. A vote more clearly heard in the political arenas of the world than the most amplified of all the political radio-networks. If ever a generation received a speaking testimony of the power of the moral life upon the political affairs of mankind, our generation had it in Mr. Gandhi.

#### IV

It is natural that his fellow countrymen should think first of his moral influence upon their own political affairs.

But Mr. Gandhi's influence is of incalculable importance for the Western world as well.

Although it is not strictly accurate to say that the life of the Western world is more and more taking on the form of a confused struggle between the moral values of historical Christianity and the impersonal values of dialectical materialism ; yet in so far as our struggle is between those who believe that the individual has an *inherent* value as an individual, and those who believe he has value only in proportion as he is an efficient member of a super-state, that description may stand. What is being challenged in the West is not the merits or demerits of private enterprise or of political democracy, *but the place of the individual in society.*

It is on this point that Mr. Gandhi as a moral personality stands as a judge over against the moral confusions of the West. Over against the capitalist immersed in the cares of production and profit, he stands as a reminder of something which the West has forgotten because of many vain repetitions—that the life is more than the meat, and the body than raiment.

Against the dialectical materialist, Mr. Gandhi stands as a vivid contemporary example of the part that the individual can play in the advancement of mankind. Indeed it is strange that dialectical materialists should ever have denied it. Their philosophy may cause them to place the main emphasis upon the economic factor as a determinant in social history, but the astonishing thing about such a philosophy is that it was evolved by a man who had no economic advantages whatever, a man who had to borrow from friends whom he neither repaid nor thanked—Karl Marx.

Karl Marx buried in a crowded London cemetery, with a tombstone so inconspicuous as to be lost amid the glossy polished splendours of more elaborate marble monuments, now exercises a potent influence upon at least one third of the world's population. Mahatma Gandhi writing no world-shaking book, being responsible for no Revolution,

reminds both East and West that their spiritual basis is something of which the Western world needs an urgent reminder. It has forgotten that the song which the mother of Jesus sang when she knew she was with child, 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek ; he hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away' is more revolutionary than the Red Flag. The basis of Christianity is more communistic than the philosophy of Marx or Lenin, because it holds to the sacredness of every living soul *as an individual* (whatever differences there may be between its belief and its practices).

It is not an accident of history that Mr. Gandhi was as familiar with the New Testament as he was with the Gita or the Mahabharata. Christianity may become more real in the West because of the cumulative effect of the Mahatma's teaching upon British politics. The exaggerated respect for riches which has corroded institutional religion in the West may be purged by the example of Mahatma Gandhi. Voluntary poverty for an ideal end is the only effective weapon with which to combat the materialistic philosophies of capitalism and collectivism.

So the real struggle in the world is not, as so many think, between communism and capitalism—it is between progressive morality and moral expediency in political life. Future historians will have to decide who after all was the most potent, Roosevelt buried in the garden of his own home, Lenin enshrined in a glass coffin in Moscow's Red Square, or the ashes of the Mahatma now being carried by the sacred rivers of India into the oceans of the whole world.

## O HEART OF MINE, AWAKE

O HEART of mine, awake in this holy place of pilgrimage,  
In this land of India, on the shore of vast humanity.  
Here do I stand with my arms outstretched to salute  
man divine,  
And sing his praise in many a gladsome pæan.  
These hills that are rapt in deep meditation,  
These hills that clasp their rosaries of rivers,—  
Here will you find earth that is ever sacred,  
In this land of India, on the shore of vast humanity.

We know not whence, and at whose call, these myriad  
streams of men  
Have come rushing forth impetuously, to lose themselves  
in this sea.  
Aryan and non-Aryan, Dravidian and Chinese,  
Scythian, Hun, Pathan and Moghul, all, all have merged  
into the body.  
Now the West has opened her doors, and they are all  
bringing their offerings,  
They will give and take, unite and be united, they will  
not turn away.  
In this land of India, on the shore of vast humanity.

Come Aryan, non-Aryan, Hindu, Mussulman, come.  
Come ye Parsees, O Christians, come ye one and all.  
Come Brahmins, let your hearts be hallowed by holding  
at men by the hand.  
Come all ye who are shunned and isolated, wipe out  
all dishonour.

O HEART OF MINE, AWAKE

Come to the crowning of the Mother, fill the sacred bowl  
With water that is sanctified by the touch of all  
In this land of India, on the shore of vast humanity.

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

## GANDHIJI AND THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

HUMAYUN KABIR

PERHAPS never before in history did an inhabitant of a dependent country achieve such position and prestige in the contemporary world as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was honoured not only as a great statesman and political leader but as a leader of thought with a new message for mankind. The principles of Christianity provide the basis of modern European civilization. Yet westerners themselves admit that these principles were more faithfully followed by this half-naked Fakir of the East than by any individual of the Western world.

East and West, however, unite in recognizing in Gandhiji one of the strongest characters of the modern age. Even those who sought to defy or repudiate him could deny the power of his personality. What then was the secret of his strength? There are among his admirers some who think that his power and influence were derived from spiritual and super-normal sources which defy analysis. This, however, is hardly any answer. For whatever its origin, his power operated on the plane of material facts and natural events. Nor is this surprising, for even super-human power requires for its manifestation a human background and field of activity. The strength of Gandhiji must, therefore, be understood in human terms.

Gandhiji's revolutionary significance lay in his attempt to release the energies contained in the endurance of the Indian people. This he sought to do by his complete identification with the average Indian. It was from his strong sense of unity with the starving, naked and ignorant masses of India that he derived his own power. And by his identification with them he sought to transfer some of that power to the masses themselves. The contrast between the energy he displayed and their passivity is at first baffling, but this

contrast itself gives a clue to the understanding of his power and his influence.

He was, however, not content to change the texture of the Indian mind alone; he felt he had a message for the entire world. Though he may not have succeeded in transforming the universe, he has everywhere stirred the mind of man. Complete success in such endeavours is perhaps, from the nature of the case, unattainable. The achievement of Indian freedom and its repercussions throughout the world prove that his endeavours have not been without avail.

Before launching the struggle for liberation, Gandhiji had to forge a weapon of proved temper. This was a difficult task on account of the loss of spiritual unity from which the Indian people suffered. The impact of the West had sundered their unity so that Indians found themselves a people of divided consciousness. The classes and the masses had drifted from one another till they had hardly any point of contact. Gandhiji set to restore the points of contact and re-establish unity. This marked his greatest political effort and made him a revolutionary leader of the first importance.

Gandhiji was born at a time when the magnificence of British power had dazzled the Indian intellect. It influenced even the feelings and the will of the people. The memories of the struggle of 1857 had not yet faded out of public consciousness. Its effects were however dissipated as different communities reached differently to it. The Indian Muslims were divided, inactive, and full of bitterness. Among the Hindus, feelings were divided. Some felt bitter; but for others there was no sense of defeat or frustration. Smaller communities like the Parsis or the Sikhs felt they had a share in the British victory of 1857. The political leadership of the British was accepted almost as an axiom not only in India but outside. It was the hey-day of British glory and *pax britanica* ruled the world.

The modern era of scientific advance had begun. It

opened to man a new world of immense possibilities. On the material plane, it led to an unprecedented development in technology. On the intellectual plane, it gave rise to nineteenth century rationalism. On the political plane, its finest manifestation was liberal democracy in the Nation State. There seemed no barrier to human progress, and it seemed that with spread of education, all human ills would be resolved. It was an era of expansion, buoyancy and faith in reason.

The prospect of endless progress inspired Indian intellectuals as well. They derived their inspiration from Britain and shared the British faith in science and democracy. European influence transcended the intellectual plane and affected the world of their emotions. Even Indian aspirations for freer and fuller life acquired a European tone. British co-operation and help were regarded as necessary elements in any endeavour for liberty.

The Indian intellectuals were so dazzled by European civilization that they attempted to transplant wholesale the culture of Europe to Indian soil. They hardly thought in terms of synthesis, for synthesis implies mutual give and take. To the Anglophil, there was little that India could give. For them, India's function was only to receive. The vast masses of Indians did not, however, feel that way. They had an instinctive sense of the value of their culture and resisted attempts at disrupting it. The Anglophil, therefore, sought to create an Indo-Anglian culture without the co-operation of the Indian people themselves. Such attempts at achieving a new culture had no roots in the life of the people. It was therefore not at all surprising that the forms and conventions of Indo-Anglian society soon became objects of ridicule.

That he diverted the energy and direction of Indian politics from Europe to India was Gandhiji's greatest achievement. Instead of attempting an Erstaz Europe, he sought to build up a genuine India. There were distinguished Indians who had worked for the people even before

he appeared on the scene. They, however, served from a pedestal of superiority and stooped only to conquer. This feeling of superiority prevented them from identifying themselves with the masses. In consequence, before the advent of Gandhiji, political activities and movements in India centred mainly round the middle and upper classes. The dumb, inert and inactive Indian people hardly understood them and did little to respond to their appeal. At best, they were silent spectators: at worst, sullen opponents of what they regarded as interference with the beneficent activities of the administration.

The restoration of spiritual community between the classes and the masses was Gandhiji's first objective, but it was not an easy task. The first step towards its achievement had to be the realization of a common life. Gandhiji's first demand on Indian political workers proved the genius of the man. He declared that they must in mode of conduct and life, speech and thought, habit and clothing, food and habitation identify themselves with the starving, naked and illiterate masses of Indian humanity. He adopted the language of the people for all political transactions. His mode of life was hardly distinguishable from that of the Indian peasant.

The response of the masses was unprecedented and almost unbelievable. They hailed Gandhiji as their own leader and representative—a leader who spoke their language, wore their clothes, ate their food. The alien imperialist sought to ridicule him as a half-naked Fakir. Such ridicule was only evidence of the obtuseness and stupidity of those who indulged in it. The scoffer did not realize that what he regarded as a cause for ridicule was in fact the secret of Gandhiji's hold over the Indian people.

This, however, is not the only evidence of Gandhiji's genius. He sought to transform India's weakness itself into a source of strength by transmuting the inertia and inaction of the Indian character. Before his advent, the constitution of the Indian masses was such that there was hardly any

possibility of an active and energetic revolution in India. Gandhiji did not quarrel with facts. He sought to use them for his own purposes. He accepted the fatalism and passivity of the Indian people but found for them a new political function. Instead of an aggressive and militant struggle, he built up a movement of non-co-operation in which passivity and endurance were turned into sources of strength and energy.

The attempts to re-integrate the social and political outlook of India was only one phase of the Gandhian experiment with truth. His more fundamental urge was to evolve a new conception of Society and the State. He sought to reconcile the traditions of the Indian people with the requirements of the modern age, and find in this reconciliation a solution of the ills of the modern world. His claim to leadership in thought is based on this outline of a new philosophy of life and action. Traditional modes of Western thought had led to a dead end, but his experiments seemed to suggest a way out of the prevailing political and social impasse.

The cause of Europe's malaise was her inability to profit by her own experience. The eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries taught men that political freedom often conceals economic slavery of the worst type. Political democracy permitted the employment of children under twelve in hard labour for sixteen continuous hours. Not only permitted, but defended such exploitation on the plea of freedom of contract and the right of the individual to sell his labour as he liked. Lawyers, politicians, doctors and even bishops came forward to justify it on legal, political, medical and religious grounds. Such iniquity could not continue indefinitely, and early in the nineteenth century the demand arose for a limitation on the freedom of contract. That the state must assure the individual not only the forms of political liberty but the content of economic freedom became the new battle-cry.

The contention that only a state and a society which

guarantee freedom from want and fear can claim the allegiance of man was accepted by everyone in theory. The unanimity disappeared when men thought in terms of ways and means to realize that end. The liberal rationalist saw the possibility of progress in the improvement of existing modes of production and the general extension of education and the franchise. The socialist repudiated the individual's right to profit at the cost of the community and sought the millenium by a gradual transformation of prevalent social forms through the extension of the power of the state. The revolutionary anarchist found the promise of a new heaven in his ideal of abolition of the state.

All these modes of thought left their mark on Gandhiji's mental make-up. Their conflict and discrepancy provoked him to attempt his own synthesis. His philosophy of life evolved as a result of his attempt to reconcile these conflicting claims against the background of Indian history and tradition. This integration of western cross-currents into an Indian background explains the revolutionary possibilities in Gandhiji's social and political thought.

The experience of the modern world proves that total rejection of industrial and machine civilization is altogether impossible. The application of science to the satisfaction of our needs is helping us to overcome climatic and physical disabilities. Applied Sciences may at first serve only a few in society but invariably its application is extended. Ultimately it can and often does benefit every single individual of the world. Machine is therefore a common servant. Only its misuse can lead to private benefit at the cost of the community. Use of machine leads to increase of common wealth and its abuse to concentration of wealth in single hands. This, however, is not the fault of the machine but of the men who abuse it and degrade men. Gandhiji's repugnance to the machine was not a repudiation of the machine as such but only a protest against such debasement of humanity.

A little reflection makes this clear. The spinning wheel

and the oil press are also machines. No doubt, they are small and worked through human or animal power, but this does not change their character as machinery. There is, however, reason for Gandhiji's suspicion of large-scale machinery. When the machine is worked by human power, it is directly under human control. Even the possibility of its abuse is strictly limited. With large-scale machinery it is different. Man himself tends to become a cog in the machine. In any case, it develops an impersonal character in which the human may easily be overlooked. The process tends to become more important than the produce or even the producer. Slowly the machine dehumanises man.

It was this danger inherent in large-scale industrialization that led Gandhiji to conceive of the autonomous and self-contained village as the unit of society. As far as possible, every village must regulate its own economic and political life. In such small units, the human relationship between individuals would be strong. It could never be replaced by merely mechanical and impersonal relationships. In village communities, there would be scope for individual freedom. There would, however, be no risk of its degeneration into licence or anarchy. The absolute dictatorship of the state and the absolute anarchy of statelessness are both attended with many risks. In the small village community, men could avoid both these dangers and carry liberal democracy to its logical conclusion.

A new type of civilization must avoid the defects inherent in rural economy and the pitfalls revealed in the working of modern civilization. The petty jealousies and wastefulness of village life as well as the soulless aridity and formlessness of urban society must be overcome if the individual is to achieve the full measure of his personality. The village is personal and intimate to the point of interference with one's private life. The city is impersonal and indifferent to the point of callousness. The defects of both must be avoided if the future civilization of the world is to permit the free growth of the individual in free society.

The evolution of a new culture in which the best elements of the past and the present will be fused demands keenness of the mind, catholicity of heart and resilience of spirit.

In the past, expansion in the scale of production inevitably provoked an expansion in the size of cities. Man's limited power required aggregation in large numbers to make an increase in the standard of life possible. Higher standards depended upon more commodities and more commodities upon larger units of production. To-day, with the substitution of electricity for steam as the main source of energy, all this has changed. Where electricity is the motive power, the concentration of multitudes in industrial town and slums is no longer inevitable. Electricity makes the distribution of industry over a large area possible. It offers a possibility of restoring conditions analogous to those which obtained in the days of rural crafts. It promises to combine the finest elements in the rural and the civic cultures of the past. Rich human relations can now be combined with increase in the riches of the world. Deep emotional vitality side by side with conditions of plenty for everybody can release human energies for new creative ventures. A dim awareness of this possibility was a factor behind Gandhiji's insistence upon decentralization of industry and the creation of small and autonomous units.

Experience of European civilization made Gandhiji realize the importance of the economic independence of the individual. Without it, political independence often becomes a mockery and democracy a mere form. He also saw that undue concentration of wealth undermined the economic independence of the individual, and yet followed almost inevitably from large-scale production under private proprietary right. His analysis so far was identical with that of Socialism. His solution was, however, different from theirs. The socialist remedy was and is to eliminate private property while Gandhiji found the solution in dispersal of industry.

The difference in the socialist and the Gandhian solu-

tion is not difficult to understand. Socialists are prepared to impose equality—political and economic and social—by violence if necessary. Gandhiji, however, felt that equality which is the basis of economic independence must be achieved through peaceful and non-violent methods. Political liberty may be and has often been achieved through bloody revolution. This, however, has, in Gandhiji's opinion, brought the form and not the substance of freedom. Those who have taken to the sword have more often than not perished by the sword. Besides, the results of violent revolution are always liable to be lost by a violent counter-revolution. It was because of his awareness of this danger that Gandhiji urged that the economic and political freedom of man must be attained through a conquest of hatred. What is achieved by persuasion is less likely to be upset by force.

Gandhiji appeared in an India where political activity was restricted to petitions and prayers to the British authorities. He changed all this, for he discovered in Indian traditions a technique of struggle suited to the land. He did not overlook the disabilities under which he had to work, but neither did he allow them to overawe and immobilise him. He knew that regeneration must be a slow process, for a people weakened and emasculated through the oppression of centuries could not be inured to sacrifice and hardship overnight.

Gandhiji's first task was to revive the spirit of self-respect of the Indian people. Once this was done, resistance to evil would be easy. The first task he set his followers was the comparatively easy one of overcoming the fear of arrest and imprisonment. Comparatively easier, no doubt, but an extremely difficult thing in the prevailing temper of the day. Imprisonment was a stigma and man avoided it more than crime. Gandhiji transformed Indian politics by his deliberate defiance of unacceptable laws with a full consciousness of the possible consequences. It is now difficult to remember the fear and nervousness which jail

life then had for the average citizen. Imprisonment for a political cause carries with it an element of martyrdom in contemporary India. By overcoming the fear of jail, Gandhiji wrought a psychological revolution whose extent we can hardly realize to-day.

Once the fear of jail had disappeared, Gandhiji felt the time had come for a second step. His aim this time was to free the people from the fear of loss of property. After their experience of the non-co-operation movement, also discovered that it was more effective to hit the pocket than the person. People who thought little of imprisonment or even physical assault hesitated when it meant permanent impoverishment. The civil disobedience movement of 1930 sought to destroy this fear of impoverishment and loss of property. Large numbers of men and women responded to his call, and for a time it seemed as if the national struggle had attained its goal. Gandhiji knew better and was not yet prepared to overstrain to his sense of realism and brought the Congress a prestige it had never enjoyed before.

The third and final step in this process of strengthening the nation's fibre was the most difficult. The fear of jail had been overcome. Large numbers had learnt to conquer the lure of property. A generation had grown up who refused to be daunted by the threat of poverty. To risk one's life is, however, another matter. Gandhiji knew that this supreme test must be imposed only when the conditions promised victory. These conditions were created after the outbreak of the war in 1939. The war not only created an appropriate situation but also compelled a struggle for the nation's emancipation. Liberty was in danger all over the world and India was called upon to succour it. How could a nation fight for the maintenance of others' freedom when it was itself in bondage? Shattering of India's bonds became necessary not only in her own interest but for the sake of the freedom of the world. It

was then and then alone that Gandhiji gave the call of 'Do or Die'.

There are devotees of Marx who profess that Gandhiji betrayed the struggle for Indian independence, not once, not twice, but on three different occasions,—in 1922, in 1931 and again in 1939 on the outbreak of the war. They characterize the suspension of the non-co-operation movement after the Chauri Chaura incident as deliberate sabotage. They say, 'Gandhiji did not want the movement to attain complete success. He knew that this could be done only through revolutionary methods. Once, however, the people resorted to revolutionary action, they would sweep away not only British Imperialism but also the vested interests of the propertied classes. This Gandhiji did not want. That is why his political moves were aimed at putting pressure on the British but not at liquidating the existing regime. That is also why he suspended the non-co-operation movement when it was on the verge of success, for he feared that once the masses had tasted victory, they would not stop with political change but go on to transform the economic structure of society.'

These pseudo-Marxists are not alone in condemning Gandhiji for suspending the non-co-operation movement. There are others also who hold that it was not the initiation but the suspension of the non-co-operation that was a Himalayan blunder. They argue that in such a vast uprising of an entire people, incidents like Chauri Chaura cannot be altogether ruled out. They further say that violence and non-violence are relative terms, and should be judged not on theoretical grounds but considerations of practical expediency.

Whatever be the objective justification for such criticism, the critics show an utter failure to understand Gandhiji's mind. For him, non-violence is a supreme value and is the standard by which our action must be judged. He did not recognize the distinction of means and ends. For him considerations of practical expediency were, therefore,

utterly irrelevant. He valued the individual in and for himself and believed that the freedom of the individual could be attained only through the discipline of non-violence. In mob frenzy the individual surrenders his independence. The incursion of mob frenzy into political action meant for Gandhiji the end of the struggle for freedom. Whether we accept his contention or not, we must admit that in suspending the non-co-operation movement, he acted consistently with his own principles. After Chauri Chaura, Gandhiji, on his own premises, had no other alternative.

Those who claim to be students of Marx, are in any case not entitled to criticise Gandhiji. They proclaim their belief in historical necessity and hold that unalterable economic laws guide the destinies of man. How then can they consistently say that Gandhiji prevented the achievement of Indian independence in 1922 by his decision to suspend the non-co-operation movement? They are not prepared to give Gandhiji credit for the awakening of the masses. They say that it was inevitable in the circumstances of the day, and dismiss Pandit Nehru's devotion to Gandhiji as superstitious hero-worship. If it is superstitious to believe that an individual can bring about the freedom of a country, is it not equally superstitious to hold that a single individual can prevent the realization of its freedom?

The true explanation of Gandhiji's decision after Chauri Chaura can be found in the course of events itself. An inert people had been moved, but the inertia of ages could not be fully dissolved so soon. Even a machine has to be carefully handled while it is new and gradually geared into use. With so delicate an organism as a newly awakened nation, the early stage required even more careful and gentle handling. With his intimate knowledge and deep community of spirit with the masses, Gandhiji realized that it would be a mistake to put too severe a strain on their newly found strength. It was enough that the masses had

shaken off their fear of jail. In spite of spasmodic outbursts of mass frenzy, they were not yet ready to sacrifice life or even property for the achievement of their goal. The first lesson in struggle and sacrifice must necessarily stop short of the supreme test.

The same considerations weighed with Gandhiji at the time of the pact with Irwin. It is true that the nation had responded magnificently to his call. Vast numbers of common men and women had overcome not only the fear of jail but also the attachment to wealth and property. They made sacrifices with a sense of exultation and clamoured to make still greater sacrifices. To a superficial observer it might well have seemed that India's hour of destiny had struck.

Gandhiji, however, knew better. He knew that though large numbers had responded to his call, still large numbers were yet inert and passive. Besides, the enthusiasm that had been evoked was sporadic and transient. The devotion which works steadily from year to year and slowly wears out the stiffest of obstacles was not yet in evidence. He felt that it was wiser to compromise while yet there was a chance of victory. The disposition of forces on both sides favoured the British if the struggle was prolonged. There was of course the possibility that if it could be prolonged long enough, the advantage would again shift over in favour of the Indian people. Gandhiji was not sure if the newly awakened masses were sufficiently strengthened in gristle to continue the struggle long enough. He decided to call a truce and the Gandhi-Irwin pact marked the height of Congress achievement in the days before the attainment of freedom.

The utter unreality of this so-called Marxist criticism is however seen most clearly in their attack on Gandhiji for not having launched what the critics would call a revolutionary mass struggle at the outset of the recent war. They contend that the British, embroiled in a life and death struggle, could not have resisted India's challenge in 1939.

In their anxiety to exaggerate England's difficulties, they, however, overlook some of the most important aspects of the situation. England, no doubt, faced a mortal threat but she still had intact her vast resources scattered throughout the world. On the other hand, conditions in India hardly favoured a fight. For Gandhiji the moral issues were supreme, but even if he had ignored them, expediency dictated the same course of action as morality. In his long experience of the Indian masses, Gandhiji had found that a political struggle gathered strength only when it was based upon economic distress. The outbreak of the war brought in the country economic prosperity, though this was, from the nature of the case, bound to be short-lived.

A struggle in 1939 would have taken place against a background of rising prices and wages. Prices of raw materials were sharply rising. The peasant was on the whole satisfied because of the increase in the price of agricultural goods. Labour was also for the moment satisfied, as the increase in wages more than compensated at this stage the rise in the cost of living. In the peculiar context of India, an alien Government took good care to see that these two classes did not have any special cause for grievance. Economic scarcity would no doubt grow, as more and more of the nation's energies was diverted to war purposes. For the time being, however, these two classes were able to achieve a slight increase in their standard of life.

A general must base his strategy on facts as they exist. The prosperity of the peasant and the working classes might be spurious and short-lived, but so long as it was there, it was doubtful if they would respond to the call for struggle. There was in addition a new source of weakness on account of the growing communal regimentation of the people. The working of provincial autonomy without the framework of an all-India Federation had released fissiparous forces and encouraged the growth of communal and provincial fragmentation. There was even a risk that the launching of a struggle might serve as the signal for the outbreak

of communal strife. It was almost certain that in the context of a war situation, the British would not hesitate to use any element that promised some diversion in the national struggle.

Nor could Gandhiji forget that any struggle launched in 1939 would take place under conditions of war. The previous struggles for freedom had all taken place during periods of peace and had to face the rigours imposed by a civil administration. During war, the Government would not hesitate to resort to military administration and martial law. The risks implicit in the struggle would therefore be far greater and could be justified only if the Indian masses were economically and politically hardened enough to fight on more than one front.

Gandhiji knew that against the background of the war, the struggle would be bitter and might be long. In any case, it would not permit any heroics. He, therefore, wanted to test the quality of the nation before taking the irrevocable step. The experiment with selected individuals in 1940 was thus only a preparation for a larger struggle.

The crisis of the war was reached in 1942. In the international field, the contending parties held one another in a precarious balance. Both the contestants had deployed their full strength and were susceptible to the slightest alteration in the disposition of their forces. Within India, rising prices had at last left rising wages far behind. Growing scarcity of consumable goods compelled a diminution in the general standard of life. The increasing economic and political difficulties had turned the mind of the people from their communal and provincial wrangles to the supreme necessity of achieving freedom here and now. Internally and externally, the stage was set for India's fight for liberty and once more it was Gandhiji who gave the call.

The rising of 1942 was a Revolution without a plan. The British dared not allow Gandhiji time to develop his strategy. Experience had taught them that he was superb

in opening a campaign. Unless apprehended before his movement had gathered momentum, he might prove well nigh unconquerable. Twice they had learnt that while he was at it, they could not afford to laugh even at seeming trivialities. Against the background of the war, they could not afford to take chances. They clapped into prison the entire leadership of the Congress even before the movement was launched.

What shape or course the Revolution of 1942 would have taken if Gandhiji had remained at the helm must remain a matter for conjecture. One thing alone is certain. He was wedded to non-violence and was not prepared to compromise on a principle for any immediate gain. At the same time, he regarded the struggle of 1942 as the final stage in the fight for India's freedom. Even his slogan was different this time. 'Do or Die', he said, but even the urgency of this last struggle could not make him say, 'Kill or die.'

To all outward appearances, the struggle of 1942 failed. Within three months, the mass uprising was crushed and law and order re-imposed upon the land. Corruption was rampant. Famine stalked the land. The war effort continued. Gandhiji and his colleagues ate out their heart behind the prison bars. And the people were denied even the knowledge of their whereabouts.

The triumph of imperialism was, however, more apparent than real. 'Quit India' said Gandhiji and a million voices took up the cry, 'Do or die' said the Leader and thousands literally laid down their lives in their effort to achieve freedom. The earlier movements had taught the people to overcome the fear of jail and the fear of poverty. This last and greatest movement of all taught his followers to shed fear of death.

When the individual is prepared to lay down his life, the community cannot die. Gandhiji taught the common man in India to overcome the fear of death. The British realized the significance of the lesson before the average

Indian. Supreme realists as they are, they knew that the days of their empire were over. They decided to go while the going was still good. Gandhiji had achieved something that had never before been attempted in history: the liberation of a people without resort to armed insurrection and violent strife.

With the achievement of freedom, Gandhiji's life-work in the field of politics was accomplished. Not, however, in the field of social and moral uplift of the people. In these fields he rose to his supremest height after 15th August 1947. The joy in the attainment of freedom was marred by the division of the country. Partition brought in its train conflict and carnage. Freedom had been bought at the cost of unity and peace.

The light of humanity grew dim over vast areas in the Indian sub-continent. On both sides of the newly created and artificial borders, hatred and fury blinded men. And even more than hatred and fury, fear. Man was afraid of man as never before in Indian history. The masses were swayed by a mad frenzy which threatened to destroy the bastions of society. The artificial political division led to a fragmentation of human personality itself. The same man was often steeped in shameful deeds of darkness and lifted to unbelievable heights of heroism and magnanimity.

When everything was uncertain and fluid, and men seemed to be threatened with the loss of humanity, Gandhiji stood like a pillar of rock. Like a beacon in the darkness, his message illumined the darkest corners of the soul. Reason and charity were his watchwords. Even from those who had suffered unspeakable sorrow and humiliation he demanded tolerance, goodwill and love. He challenged their manhood and declared that to debase human standards was worse than death. He denounced private vengeance and retaliation which violate man's inmost nature and destroy the very basis of society. So long as he lived, the forces of evil feared that they could not triumph. It was, therefore, not surprising that they should strike at

him and seek to quench the light which held at bay the garthering darkness.

Evil struck at him and killed his mortal body, but his message it could not kill. Liberated from physical bonds, his spirit strode the world and achieved a power which in his life he had never enjoyed. His death vindicated his life, and in death he triumphed even as another who conquered the world by laying down his life two thousand years ago.

## GANDHI AND INDIAN CIVILIZATION

LOUIS RENOU

How MUST we judge the man? If he had been nothing but a saint, we could easily agree on a name for him, as we shall later, when the passions of the hour are spent. But he was associated with action, of the sharpest and most virulent kind; his holiness was steeped in action. Our judgment must therefore rest on the results he achieved. He achieved the liberation of India, but not its political unification, and he was able to carry out only a part, perhaps a very small part, of the work of social 'revolution'. Would other methods have been more effective? Would another have first attempted to change the social conditions which have caused this centuries-old subjection, or to meet the threats of the modern world with its own weapons? It is a debatable point.

Gandhi's career is both fascinating and disconcerting. Fascinating because of his tenacious, unbending effort to introduce moral values into the course of human history, to base a policy on them and them alone, to renounce everything else which might have led to the same ends, perhaps more quickly. Disconcerting—not only on account of those outward peculiarities which strike the Westerner so forcibly, but precisely because politics has its own methods, shifting irregularly between cunning and force and never encroaching upon the world of the spirit, even in the case of a Saint Louis.

As soon as Gandhi became aware of his destiny during his years of mental growth in South Africa, he sought to make those exigencies which normally apply only to the individual, a part of public and political life. What a challenge! To put truth and purity (in the Indian sense, which first means material cleanness, cleanness of contact and food) above success, to claim that the road to success

lay through these very virtues, and to impose this new code of values on a world which takes no heed of means but admits only ends! .

In India, as elsewhere, this attitude would not have compelled recognition if the man had not possessed those external gifts capable of rousing the masses: a straightforward, homely eloquence, slightly hortative in the Indian manner, with plenty of repetitions in that popular language formerly used by the Buddha. He had patiently forged his popularity by constant contact with the people: did he not force himself to practise a dozen manual crafts, some of them very difficult? He had a sense of opportuneness, doing at the right moment what his inner voice (he said) dictated to him, that is, what he felt the masses expected of him. After his first successes, his prestige could not but increase when people saw this man, naked, without titles or money, rising without fear or the use of force to become the spiritual leader of a great empire.

The path of success is never straight. At diplomatic conferences the moralizer of the after-prayer meetings became an advocate who was master of himself (self-control is the first virtue of princes, said Kautilya), never at a loss for an argument, with that involved reasoning used in all simplicity in Sanskrit dialectics, and that tradition of controversy which persists from age to age through Indian literature. He knew the right moment to abandon non-violence, the very cornerstone of his system. The man who, on 18 June 1940, admired the readiness of the French Government to come to terms, who on 6 July appealed 'to all British people' to open their cities and homes to the German invader, was the same man who, in 1942, when India was threatened in her turn, declared he would abandon non-violence and was ready to co-operate (as he had done in 1914), refusing to follow Subhas Chandra Bose. And more recently, during a sharp crisis in the Hindu-Moslem conflict, he held (at least if what he is reported to have said reflects his true thoughts) that plans could and should be made for

war. Did he not write that violence is better than cowardice, although it is true that non-violence is the best solution (we recognize here the stock formulas of Sanskrit maxims)?

Such compromises he felt to be temporary infringements which violated no principles. On the other hand, he was known to stop a strike and reject the fruits of promised victory rather than incur the risk of bloodshed.

How far are these principles woven into the pattern of India's past? This is what we should like to show in few words. We are not called upon to explain everything. The work of Gandhi owes something to chance: on several occasions he was near to being overwhelmed by events, and the cruel, absurd death which he met at the age of 79 might have been his lot long before. He could not have succeeded but for the two wars and the upheaval they caused: it is because the time is ripe that it is easy to achieve one day what the day before was a Utopia.

But above all Gandhi successfully reflected the latent aspirations of a people. It is not in Moslem or pre-Moslem history that we must look first for his exemplars. Ancient India did not lack enlightened princes or great spiritual leaders, beginning with the extraordinary figure of the Buddha. But the former (almost without exception) laid no claim to act in the name of a moral order: when they withdrew from the world, at least according to tradition, they did so for their personal salvation, they entered the path of 'deliverance'. And the latter, though men of action in their way, like Sankara or Ramanuja, who directed religious propaganda, never pretended to play a political role. The Buddha resolutely set himself above temporal values, accepting the Brahminic society of his day and keeping to the forms of the Hindu *dharma*. There is only one exception: the Emperor Asoka in the third century before our era. He became the master of almost the whole of India after a series of bloody wars and conquests, then suddenly abandoned this policy and inaugu-

rated a reign of justice and mercy based on *dharma*. But a man who seizes power and, after attaining his ends, renounces the means to which he owes success, is one thing ; the man who starts from nothing and reaches the highest rank by the most unpromising methods is another.

On the whole, we must look for Gandhi's forerunners in the leaders of sects, the countless men who 'cleared paths' and 'opened up ways'. In the middle ages and up to the present, there are examples of such men, coming from all social and spiritual strata, gathering communities about them, adopting new gospels, sometimes trying to make their way in the social or political field by means which they invariably claimed to derive from those gospels. Such are Basava in the 12th century with the Lingayats, Ramananda and Kabir in the 15th century, Nanak, the founder of the Sikhs, in the 15th and 16th centuries. But what these men viewed in terms of the locality and of the needs of the sect, Gandhi conceived for India as a whole.

We must turn, however, to the great works of literature rather than to history, real or legendary. India has always been the country of Buddhist and Jainist doctrines, the teaching of the Vedas and Upanishads, the dialectics of the Vedanta, the Laws of Manu, the discourses of the Great Epic, a whole treasure-house of gnostic maxims running in a continuous line from the Buddhist sutras to Tukaram, Vemana and Ramakrishna. It is the eternal bedrock of Indian spirituality, the real India.

Gandhi was far from possessing a wide culture, but tradition is in the reach of all in a country where everything, even to one of a non-religious turn of mind, as he claims to have been in his youth, inevitably conjures up the twin concepts of myth and ritual. He read the 'Gita,' he reflected on the Upanishads, and he knew enough Sanskrit to follow in the original such relatively easy and popular texts as these are.

Beyond doubt a profound sense of mortification, of *tapas* or 'ascetic burning' is inherent in the Indian make-up.

Gandhi's exaltation of the hard life, his horror of luxury, his need of being poor (and, indirectly, of impoverishment) echoes all India's past. It is in the most rigorous self-restraint, according to classical Yoga law, that the Indian hopes to find the true road. The thwarting of man's natural tendencies is one of the themes of his speculation; there have been doctrines of pleasure—in tantrism or, on the profane level, in the ideal of Kamasastra—there are others directed towards power and gain (Arthasastra), but none are directed towards ease. It is by the steepest slopes that the Indian climbs the mountains, by the least predictable turn that he clears an obstacle. Even the path of love and faith (bhakti) or of mystical intuition (samadhi) demands a severe discipline, like the ways of knowledge or action.

Another fairly constant attitude is tolerance. The irruption of Islam doubtless modified the conditions of life, but on the whole, for a country with such a bewildering number of religions movements, how few have been the persecutions and wars of religion! Buddhism died a natural death when its message lost its value. It was not a conscious eclecticism, but indifference to the strict letter of dogma, the infinite power of absorption of the Hindu dharma, which created the essential conditions of this tolerance. Sects and schools exist side by side, split and are readjusted within Hinduism or on its fringes, never wholly repudiated, and combining the extremes of spirituality and idolatry (the Indian has almost no sense of inconsistency); Sankara, believing in pure 'acosmic' monism, was a votary of the god Siva, the Creator, the moulder of shapes par excellence.

Would Gandhi's famous fasts, his most formidable weapon, have had the same power anywhere but in India, where the 'hunger-strike' has been employed from time immemorial as a means of moral or religious coercion against an individual or a community whom the faster wishes to make responsible for his death? Thus, an old custom, sanctioned by law, authorizes a creditor to fast be-

fore the door of a defaulting debtor and to besiege his house; this practice is inherited from the border zones of the Indo-European world, for it is found, similarly codified, among the Celts, and has produced in contemporary Ireland effects parallel to those observed in India.

And non-violence? Non-violence is a cardinal point in the ethical doctrine of the Jainas, where it has assumed the naive forms with which we are familiar. But although less apparent, it is the basis of Buddhist teaching, and Brahminism is by no means foreign to it. The term *ahimsa* appears as early as the Chandogya Upanishad and, with mortification, charity and uprightness, is one of the four cardinal virtues which Gandhi would not deny. The motive recurs again and again; the laws of Manu, for instance, forbid the Brahmin to practise agriculture because ploughing, harvesting and threshing constitute 'pramrita', that is, according to the traditional explanation, the means of destroying the animalcules living in the soil or in plants. The Hindu's regard for life is well-known.

India, it is said, is steeped in religiosity, and it is true. But religion, a concept that can be defined by no one word, is co-extensive in that country with the whole of human activities; the term *dharma* embraces moral attitudes, human justice, merit, rights and duties. There is no balance between immanence and transcendence, between the supreme (but impersonal) god and the personal (but polymorphous, subject to karman, non-autonomous) divinity.

The piety of Indians is immense, spectacular, but it is canalized in almost immutable customs. There are rites, not dogmas, speculation, but little theology. Early Buddhism consists of definite religious forms, but it is an atheistic faith which retains inferior 'gods' and rejects the substance; it appears in the agnosticism of certain Upanishads, in the syncretism of the Gita, the impersonalism of the Advaita.

In short, Gandhi is a true Indian when he expounds the

themes of existence on a plane of human values, adopting an ethical system which brings contrasting forces into play, and combining it with a diffuse process of divinization. Satyagraha, the old watchword devised for his African campaigns, the 'hold upon truth' or 'obstinate efforts towards the true' (the term is typically equivocal), is a reversion to the ancient notion of satya, which denoted both moral truth and reality (what should be, is, the norm is the real, the normative dharma is also the dharma of experience) even ritual exactitude, after it took the place of another symbol, rita, 'the ordering of the cosmos and ordering of the being'. These are words overflowing with meanings and applications, full of latent threats through their very ambiguity, which Gandhi rediscovered, and used as magic forces: it is the same magic which once subjected the 'sacred formula of esoteric type' (the Brahmin), to a gradually increased valuation until it became the very principle of all things. The negative notions, so dear to Buddhism, are not least charged with magic: take *ahimsa*, for instance, which is not so much 'non-violence' as 'action based on the refusal to do harm', and *abhaya*, another old term in speculation, which means not so much 'non-fear' as the active state which lies beyond fear. For Gandhi bade the masses prostrated by long servitude not to 'cease to suffer' but to 'cease to fear'. Gandhi is the inheritor of the Bhagavad-Gita. This famous poem (perhaps too famous; there is more grandeur in other monuments of Indian genius), which is rich enough in contrasts to permit of the most heterogeneous speculations and sustain the faith of the most diverse sects, started at least from a clear and dramatically concrete position. The great battle of the Epic is about to begin, the opposing forces are in their places, and only the signal of the leaders is awaited. Arjuna, the hero of the contending armies, wavers before the cruel decision. He wonders if it is not better to let himself be struck without defence, without weapons, than to shed blood in a fratricidal struggle: 'we know not which is the more

dangerous, to conquer those who, if we overcome them, will destroy our enjoyment of life, or to be conquered by them'. And Arjuna's charioteer, who is slowly revealed as the god Krishna himself, calms the anguish of the hero and counsels him to follow the *dharma* of the warrior, assuring him that existence is valueless, that thought alone matters, and so on. This typically Indian teaching is at first sight far removed from the *ahimsa* towards which Arjuna for a moment inclined. But there lies the inspiration of the bard, the requirement of an epic fable. When the author of the Gita begins speaking in his own name, the poem departs far from this exordium. It exalts asceticism, self-knowledge, the virtues and methods which lead to 'deliverance', to culminate in a sort of theophany. This manner of integrating act and thought, of thinking in terms of the act, of renouncing in the midst of action, and, as Indians say, of renouncing the fruits of action, is the essence of Gandhi's effort.

Many other points deserve mention. His social ideal was not so much to abolish caste as to offset its effects, while maintaining (at least for the present) the framework of the four great social divisions going back to the remotest past. This is the teaching of the Buddha himself, of the sages and thinkers of ancient or mediaeval India, and it is the impression derived from Sanskrit literature, which, taken as a whole, ignores the 'caste' (*jati*) and recognizes only the class (*varna*). The rejection of industrialization and mechanism was—even before its embodiment in texts—the programme of the old semi-autonomous village communities, as often described in the inscriptions of the South.

Gandhi crystallized about him the living forces of the soil. What other country but India could have furnished the spectacle presented shortly before he died: of two peoples ready to confront each other in war and this frail, unarmed old man intervening as a new Krishna, with only his own death to offer as a threat?

The astonishing thing is that he succeeded, at a time

when the world is riven by passions, weak and disconcerted before the engines of tyranny. Gandhi as the contemporary of the dictators, there is the miracle.

Rightly or wrongly, India is tempted in other directions. She has not ceased to wish for or to suffer *maya*. She aims at resuming her place among the strong States of the world, devoted to material progress, big armaments and socialization. She has the means of reaching the goal, and to be among the leaders in the race. Ascetics and mystics will pursue their destiny in the immensity of her retreats, in more or less obscure ways and following strictly individual ends. A second Gandhi is scarcely imaginable (Gandhism itself will probably degenerate into just one more sect). He is a survival. But by his success in rousing the Indians from their apathy, his work, whether he wished it or not is a portent of approaching change.

# MAHATMA GANDHI

## THE GREATEST MAN SINCE JESUS CHRIST

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

A GENERATION ago, Gandhi was almost entirely unknown outside the borders of his native land, or known only as a queer sort of person, who was doing extraordinarily queer things with his fellow countrymen. Here was a man who strode the countryside of India, clad only in a loin cloth, bare-footed, and leaning on a beggar's staff. A man who lived by deliberate choice among the poorest of the poor of the common people of his land! A man who deliberately made the cause of the despised untouchables his own, and in token of his faith and sincerity, adopted into his own family, to live in his home, to eat at his table, to share his life, an orphan girl of the untouchable class! A man who actually taught in all sincerity the crazy doctrine of non-violence, and dared to challenge the mightiest empire of the world, on behalf of the freedom of India, with no weapon available except non-violent non-co-operation. Winston Churchill called him, in scorn and contempt, a 'half-naked fakir', and the world laughed in merriment.

Then slowly, as the years went by, this man began to grow, and like a mountain emerging from clouds of mists, to dominate the whole landscape of our world. We came to recognize in him the great nationalist leader who was liberating four hundred millions of his countrymen from the armed tyranny of alien rule; and this, in an unprecedented and unparalleled war which made no resort to force, violence, or bloodshed. Then gradually, and very much I think to our own surprise, we found that we were reverencing Gandhi as a saint of pure and humble life, worthy in every word and deed of the beatitude, bestowed upon him in his own lifetime, of Mahatma, 'the Great Soul.' And then strangely, and almost unconsciously, we

developed an affection for this man, an affection which left us stricken as though by a deep personal loss when the word came across the seas that he was dying. Jane Addams writes in the pages of her autobiography, entitled *Twenty Years at Hull House*, in remembrance of the day when she saw her father break down and cry when he heard of the death of Abraham Lincoln. She says this made a great impression upon her, for up to that time she had thought that only children ever cried. There must have been something of that kind of a convulsion in the hearts of many of us when there came the fatal news from New Delhi.

When something of the initial shock and horror of this assassination had passed away, there remained, at least in my mind, a burning sense of the supreme irony of it all, an irony as tragic as any that I have ever found in the pages of Greek drama. That Mahatma Gandhi, of all men living in the world, should have to die this way! The irony, for example, that Gandhi, who never cherished an unkind thought, and never did an unkind deed, who fought England for forty years with never a feeling of bitterness toward any Englishman anywhere, who forgave Moslems and Hindus alike for the injury they were doing to one another, and asked them only to love one another as he loved them both—that this man should die beneath the stroke of the hate and vengeance! The irony that Mahatma Gandhi, the supreme preacher and practitioner, not only in our time but in all the ages gone by, of the great principle of non-violence, should himself be called upon to fall as the victim of outrageous violence. The irony again, that with his life purpose accomplished, with India free and India's people, after an initial ordeal of wild bloodshed, entering under his guidance upon the sure pathways of reconciliation and peace, he should be struck down on the very threshold of his sublime triumph. History seems to delight in ironies of this kind. Socrates, the servant of truth, made to drink the hemlock; Jesus of Nazareth, and prophet of God's kingdom upon the earth,

the victim of crucifixion; Abraham Lincoln, the sweetest and gentlest of men, struck down by a murderer's bullet. And now, as the crown and climax of all this historic irony, Mahatma Gandhi dead at the hand of a wild assassin. I wonder, have we always needed the purging of these woes, and do we need it still, to teach us of our own sins of violence and hate, and show us, however bitterly, the better way of life!

How clearly do I remember the first time I ever heard of Gandhi. I have told the story more than once, but I must tell it again on this occasion. How in 1921 I came across his name, up to the moment unknown to me, in the pages of a magazine, and in the space of a few paragraphs of the article, read the epic story of Gandhi's experience in South Africa. That was in many ways the turning point of my life. Here I had been told, in a sort of a vague way through many years, that the ideals of the spirit which I had cherished within my soul—to love our enemies, resist not evil, to forgive men not seven times but seventy times seven—that these ideals were impracticable. That Jesus did not really mean what he seemed to mean when he said these things. That these principles were laws laid down for an ideal kingdom of God, and not for an existing society upon the earth! And here, I discovered that there was a man now, far away in South Africa, who took these ideals seriously, and made them the rule and precept of his life, and was actually proving them to be practicable and effective. I felt at that moment as Christopher Columbus must have felt when he looked upon the shores of San Salvador shining in the noon-day sun. I felt, I think, as Madame Curie must have felt when she saw that little spark of radium all aglow with an incredible brilliance in the dark shadows of her laboratory. I felt like the astronomer, described by John Keats, in his immortal sonnet, 'On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer,' who was gazing through a telescope at the midnight sky and suddenly, without warning, 'saw a new

planet swim into his ken.' From that moment on, the conviction dwelt within my soul that our world had no parallel to Gandhi. And as the years passed and Gandhi grew in greatness, power and beauty, I came to feel that even mankind through the centuries gone by had only a few great names that could be matched with his.

How clearly do I remember the first time I saw Gandhi, in 1931, at Folkestone, on a cold, foggy and rainy day, when I waited with a few others on the pier to greet him, when, crossing the English Channel, he landed upon English shores to take his seat at the famous Round Table Conference of that day. I found myself talking with an English policeman, who suddenly pointed up the coast to the chalky cliffs of the channel, and said: 'Do you know, just round those cliffs, is the place where Julius Caesar came when he invaded Britain.' Then, after a moment's silence, he turned in the other direction, and said: 'Only a few miles down the coast there, beyond that fog-bank, is the place where William the Conqueror landed just before the battle of Hastings.' Just at that moment, or so it seemed, the prow of the Mahatma's ship came poking through the fog. And for once in my life I had an inspiration. I said within myself, 'Here comes the third and greatest conqueror of Britain.' Little did I realize at that time that it would take only sixteen years for Britain to retire from India, and for Mahatma Gandhi thus to stand the conqueror of the greatest empire the world had seen since the decline and fall of Rome. He was a curious looking conqueror! I can see him now as he came from the ship and went pattering up the wet and foggy pier to the train that was waiting to take him to London. Julius Caesar and William the Conqueror had been clad in mail, but Gandhi wore only his loin cloth, and a small khaddar shawl drawn closely around his shoulders. Caesar and William had carried unsheathed swords to slay their enemies, but Gandhi only carried a grotesque umbrella to protect him from the rain. Caesar and William had been followed by armed legions

of trained soldiery to wreak havoc on the land, to lay waste the fair island of Britain, but Gandhi was surrounded only by a little company of men and women, his disciples who were accompanying him to London.

What a strange, and I say again, grotesque panorama it was! But I saw Gandhi on that happy and ever memorable day, as I did not really know at that time, the conqueror not only of the British Empire, but also of the world. Think of what happened in Delhi! I can see it, for I have looked upon that city, and seen the place of this immortal and indescribable spectacle. A procession miles long, made up of men and women of every religion, race, nationality and creed. More than a million of them gathered upon the banks of the Jumna River, to see Gandhi's body burned in blazing light and lifted up to heaven. And these people, even though they were more than a million in number, merely a token of those who spiritually were gathered in that procession of mourning and sorrow. For all India, from north to south and east to west, was marching in that great procession. And not only all India but all the world, for the world was standing still and silent, in reverence of this one man, as his frail body was burned, and his mighty soul liberated into eternity. I say it advisedly, measuring my words, that the greatest statesman who ever lived, and the mightiest soldier, never received such a tribute as this, and I venture to prophesy never will. Gandhi had captured the heart of mankind. There wasn't any man anywhere who did not love him—such is the power of the spirit. And Gandhi had conquered as well not only the affections of our hearts, but the convictions of our minds. As the world bowed in homage before this man, what was it but a confession of sin that he was right, and we knew it; and that all the dreadful ways of force and violence, which we have followed through the centuries, were not only wrong but criminal and wicked. When we thought of nothing but New Delhi and the dead Gandhi, it

was with penitence within our souls that he should have walked the way of life alone, or a few of us, perhaps, following afar and wishing unto God that we had the strength and courage and patience and long-suffering to be even as he. Yes, Gandhi is the immortal and omnipotent conqueror, for he possesses the hearts of men forever, and as long as there is a human race upon this planet, will be remembered and revered. When all the kings and princes and great captains of our time, who make so much noise and occupy so central a place upon the stage, when these have long since been forgotten, every one of them, the Mahatma will still be known and revered as the greatest Indian since Gautama the Buddha, and as the greatest man since Jesus Christ.

When I lectured on Gandhi in India—and it lifts up my heart to remember this day that I had the blessed opportunity of going to India and talking to great Indian audiences in love and homage of their great prophet—I used to think at the time of how impudent it was, that I, a man from the militant West, should come to India to talk to Indians about Gandhi. In every address that I made on Gandhi, I always started out with a fervent word of apology. But at this moment it rings like bells of joy within my heart that I had the chance to speak, and to say how I loved this man. Always in my lectures I used to say that Gandhi's life, as I understood it and could analyse it, was divided into three great periods, and every period was an epic in itself, an incomparable chapter of history which mankind will never forget. Think of it in passing, that you and I should be privileged to live in an age which has seen these chapters of history written, and to hear the words and feel the presence of this consummate spirit.

The first period of Gandhi's life is a period of twenty years, from 1894 to 1914, and the scene of the great drama is South Africa. Gandhi as a young man and a young barrister, went to South Africa on a piece of legal business.

He was absolutely unconscious of the way in which he was setting his feet. He saw not the slightest vestige of the destiny that was awaiting him. But when he came to South Africa, he felt within his own life what it was to be a coloured man in a world dominated and ruled by white men. For the first time in his experience he was made to face and suffer prejudice, discrimination and insult. He was thrown off a train, for example, because in South Africa at that time coloured people were not supposed to ride on trains with white people. On one notable occasion he was refused admission to a Christian church, because he was dark-skinned, and only people who were fair-skinned went to that church of Jesus Christ. But Gandhi was not so much overwhelmed and humiliated by what happened to him as by what he saw happening to his fellowmen and fellow-countrymen—the tens of thousands of coolies in South Africa, the poorest of the poor and the meanest of the mean, who were treated in that part of the world as Negroes are treated in the United States of America. And his heart went out to these people. And deliberately he stepped out of his place in life, left behind his appointed caste, gave up the practice of the law, sacrificed his property and his repute, and associated himself with these wretched coolies, and undertook single-handed the great task of their legal and social emancipation. It was in this endeavor that he worked out his programme of non-violent non-cooperation, which means on the one hand, negatively speaking, non-cooperation with evil and evil doers, and on the other hand, positively speaking, willingness to suffer but never to wreak suffering upon other men, and to love without stint and without discrimination enemies as well as friends.

I have no time to tell here the story of the twenty years' struggle in South Africa, which ended, of course, in victory, for non-violence is irresistible, unconquerable, when it is implemented by a soul that really believes it and is not afraid to practise it. This chapter of Gandhi's life is really important not in itself, but in its

relation to the later tale of what happened in India. Its place is that of an overture in relation to an opera. It was the beginning of his task and the announcement of the themes which were going to dominate his soul throughout the remainder of his days. South Africa was a kind of laboratory where Gandhi tested the practicability of his non-violent principles and proved that they would work. South Africa was a school wherein he disciplined his own life to the patience, the courage and the long suffering that fitted him to live as the practitioner of non-violence. South Africa was a training ground where he learned how to organize thousands of his fellowmen to strict obedience to the principles which he would lay upon their souls. Gandhi in these twenty years suffered everything. He met humiliation and insult; of course he went to prison, more times than at this moment I can seem to remember; and it was here that for the first time he was felled to the ground by a would-be assassin. For a wild man in South Africa, like a wild man in New Delhi, sought to take his life, and Gandhi was left in the gutter by the side of the road as one who was dead. Fortunately he was picked up in time and taken to the hospital, and the first thing he did when he awakened to consciousness, was to ask that the younger assassin be brought to him. And when the frightened young man, now brought to his senses, was led to Gandhi's bedside, the dear man opened wide his arms, as though to clasp him to his bosom, and he said, 'Oh my dear young man, my son, what have I done that you were moved to do this thing?' And the young man fell in penitence and tears upon the ground before the Mahatma, and for years lived as one of the most devoted of his followers. I remember, in the light of this divinely beautiful story, that when Gandhi was shot at his prayer meeting, in that brief interval of time when he was conscious, knew what had happened, and realized that his last moment had come, even before he crumpled helplessly to the ground, he was able to lift his hand to his brow

in the Hindu salute of forgiveness, and therewith to die with the blessing of his heart upon the wild assassin. These things Gandhi learned in South Africa. The story of those twenty years is one of the immortal epics of human history, likely perhaps to be forgotten, so small it seems as brought into comparison with the stupendous drama of India itself, but never really to be forgotten, since it was those years and their discipline and their ultimate triumph that made Gandhi to be the man that he was in his greatest days.

The second period of Gandhi's life is the period from 1914 to 1947, the years when Gandhi was the leader of the Indian people in the stupendous struggle for national independence. It is interesting and rather ironical to recall that when at the close of the Great War, Gandhi and his associates submitted their terms to the British Empire, Gandhi was at that time not seeking the full freedom of his country. All that he asked for and all that he expected in 1919 was a grant of dominion status to India. And how ironical it is to remember that had Great Britain been wise enough in 1919 to grant this dominion status, there probably never would have been any struggle for national independence. But it was a case at that time, as so often, of too little and too late. When Great Britain reached the time when she was ready to grant dominion status, Gandhi and the great army of Indian liberators had moved beyond that point. It was now full liberty or nothing.

The real struggle began in 1921, with the opening of Gandhi's first non-cooperative and non-violent campaign for freedom. It is the testimony of Lord Lloyd, the Governor at that time of the Province of Bombay, that in 1921 and 1922 Gandhi came within the breadth of an eyelash of securing the emancipation of his people. So unconquerable is the non-resistant, so powerful the man who wields not the sword of steel but the sword of the spirit! Remember that Britain, like the Roman Empire yesterday, knew exactly what to do with a man who came armed against her. Every empire, every military power,

knows how to handle an attack of violence. They have fought the armies of their foes through so many years that they have nothing new to learn, no effective instrument of violence is beyond their knowledge and their use. But when a man, or rather an army of men, comes against an empire bare-handed and barefooted, armed not even with stones or staves, practising not violence in any form but absolute non-violence, loving their enemies and seeking to serve them even as they love and serve their friends, the empire doesn't know what to do. The *New York Times*, in its great leading editorial spoke of the British Empire as being baffled by Mahatma Gandhi's campaign of non-resistance. Of course the Empire was baffled! All that it could do was to take Gandhi and his associates and put them in prison. And behind the prison bars Gandhi learned that he was more powerful than he was anywhere else. In a moment of that charming humor which always characterized his life, he said that he early discovered that he could make the best bargains when he was in jail. So it was in 1921 and 1922 that he began his fight for India, and it was a fight such as the world had never seen before. There were certain things that Gandhi did that nobody else had ever done, or had ever thought of doing. This campaign was his campaign, marked by the peculiar genius of his life, and dominated by the sublime influence of his spirit.

For one thing, from the very beginning, Gandhi insisted upon identifying his life with the lives of the great masses of the people of India. There had been champions of Indian independence before Gandhi. He wasn't the first! But these men were men far separated from the Indian masses. They were men who had been educated in the western world, who wore western clothes, who insisted upon talking the English language; and between these westernized Indians and the Indian people, there was a vast gulf that never was bridged. Then Gandhi came along and he identified himself with the common people, just as they

were. This was the reason why he insisted upon wearing the loin cloth. For years here in the western world we simply couldn't understand why Gandhi did that grotesque thing. We thought it meant that he was a queer man, and probably, perhaps, a little cracked. But this Gandhi did deliberately, as a symbol of his faith and of his life. Since unnumbered millions of Indians could wear nothing but the loin cloth, then he would wear that loin cloth himself, that he might identify himself the more closely with the great masses of men and women whom he would serve. This was the reason also why he made himself propertyless, stripping himself of practically every possession in the world. The reason was very simple. The multitudes of the Indian people owned nothing, and that being the case, he would be one with them, and himself own nothing. I think I can say that when he died, as through all these years gone by, Gandhi owned only two or three loin cloths, and a shawl or two, a pair of spectacles, a one-dollar Ingersoll watch, a fountain pen, and a few sheets of paper. That's all the property he owned or wanted to own, just that he might be identified with the life of the Indian people. This was the reason he organized his Asram and for years lived with his followers in this Asram. The Asram was really nothing in the world but a kind of a duplicate of a typical Indian village. And since there were seven hundred thousand of these villages in India, in which hundreds of millions of his fellow countrymen lived, he also would live in such a place, that he might be the more close to the people whom he loved and whom he sought to lead.

In the last letter I received from the Mahatma, a letter awaiting me on my return from India, he expressed, in his humorous way, some little regret that I had travelled so fast and so far in India, by planes on the one hand and railroad trains on the other. He reminded me that India was a land of the bullock cart, and that if I hadn't been so much of an American, I might wisely have chosen to travel

by this native vehicle from place to place. A little suggestion, perhaps, that I hadn't come so very close to the Indian people when flying in an airplane! Gandhi when so travelling, would certainly have gone in the bullock cart, but for years he chose to walk. For since the majority of the Indian people always walked, sometimes hundreds of miles when they journeyed from one place to another, so also did Gandhi choose to walk, a kind of a pilgrim into the hearts of his people, living their lives and cherishing their destiny.

Another thing that Gandhi did in his great campaign for freedom! He taught his people for the first time the secret of personal dignity and self-respect. For nearly two hundred years the Indian people had lived subject to the alien rule of the British Empire. They had become as slavish and subservient in spirit as they were subject under the operation of British law. They bowed obsequiously before the westerner, daring not even to say or to show that perhaps their souls might still remain their own. And then Gandhi came along, dowered first of all with his own supreme sense of dignity and his belief in the integrity of his people, and conveyed to the unlettered and illiterate millions of the fellow-countrymen, that same sense of dignity and honour, of power and right, that lived within himself. It was under the influence of the Mahatma that the Indians raised themselves from out the dust, dared for the first time to stand erect and look an Englishman straight in the face. When, after years of teaching and of discipline, he thus lifted up the people from debasement and subjection, and had taught to them the dignity and honour of their own manhood, he knew that his fight was won. For once self-respect was achieved within the masses, their power was of course supreme.

In the third place, Gandhi organized the Indian people unashamedly around his own personality. For years Gandhi spent most of his time just travelling from village to village throughout all the vast area of continental India. When

he had lived in a village for a few days and then had gone upon his way as a pilgrim to the next village, he left behind what we have learned to call in this day a kind of a cell, an organized group of men and women, just a few of them in each village, who understood and were ready to act. They knew what Gandhi meant by non-violent non-cooperation. They had been taught the discipline of that kind of a life, and there they were as his representatives and his followers to obey his word and do his work. It can be said that, after a period of years, Gandhi had organized the whole Indian people around himself in the great undertaking of national independence, and the power of such organization, led by such a personality, was indeed, as it proved to be, irresistible.

Another thing that Gandhi did, and a supreme evidence of his imagination and creative genius! Gandhi was able to give to the masses of the Indian people something to do in their great struggle for liberty. You know how often the question is asked in matters of reform—what can I do? I think I can almost say that I never made a speech before a public forum about any problem of reform but what somebody got up and said, What can I do? And I have always been baffled by this question. I haven't got imagination enough to conceive a right answer. And so I usually suggest, as other Americans do in answer to such an inquiry, that we write our congressman, or perhaps the President. But Gandhi was an intellectual as well as a spiritual genius. Gandhi had an answer to this question. Why do you suppose, years ago, that Gandhi equipped himself with a spinning-wheel, and devoted a couple of hours of every day for a period of years to spinning khaddar cloth upon this wheel? This seemed to me, as it did to others, a waste of precious time and strength. But what was Gandhi really doing? He was teaching the unnumbered millions of his fellow-countrymen that here was something that they could do for independence. That if everyone would make a spinning-wheel to whirl within the

home, and all of them give themselves thus to the manufacture of cotton cloth, India upon the instant would be delivered from the economic tyranny of the British cotton trade, and economically if not politically, would be free. He gave the Indians something to do, and millions of spinning-wheels have turned and turned for years, in obedience to the example of the Mahatma. Then there was the famous march to Dandi, when Gandhi and his followers walked dramatically across the Indian countryside to the seashore, and Gandhi, in almost melodramatic fashion, waded into the sea, lifted up a pail of the sea-water, and brought it to the shore that it might be distilled into salt, and therewith delivered the people from the tyranny of the iniquitous salt tax imposed upon them by the Empire. Gandhi was not only himself resisting the rule of Britain by this act, but he was teaching the millions of his fellow-countrymen that here was something that each one of them could do. They could wade into the sea, distil the salt, and therewith prove themselves rebels against the British Crown and the British law.

Gandhi was the man who found out comparatively early in his career, that one thing that everybody could do was to go to prison. He chose to go to prison, and herewith he proved the enormous effectiveness of serving a sentence behind bars. And since Gandhi had done it, then everybody could do it, and English prisons became so flooded that English authorities didn't know what to do with the men, women and even children who volunteered for service. You know, when you go to India to-day, you have a curious experience. Sooner or later when you are talking with your host, who may be a governor of a province, a Vice-Chancellor of a university, or something of the sort, you discover that this man has a prison record, and that he's very proud of it. By the time I left India I had the feeling that everybody who was worthwhile in India had a prison record. I knew this because they referred to it so easily, and were so glad to tell me on the experiences they had in

prison. So different from our country! When a man has a prison record in America, he does not say anything about it. He keeps it quiet. But here was a noble service that Gandhi taught the Indian people they could offer on behalf of their great cause. And so by supreme creative and imaginative genius, Gandhi found great answers to the question as to what the humblest of Indians could do to help his country.

Lastly, Gandhi gave to the Indian people the weapons wherewith to carry on their fight, weapons of unimaginable power, weapons that guaranteed eventual victory, and in Gandhi's own time, praise be to God, won the victory that he could see. Gandhi's programme of non-violent resistance is unprecedented in the history of mankind. The principle itself, 'resist not evil and love your enemies', is nothing new. It is at least as ancient as the teachings of Jews of Nazareth in the Sermon on the Mount. But Gandhi did what had never been done before. Up to his time the practice of these non-resistant principles had been limited to single individuals, or to little groups of individuals. Gandhi worked out the discipline and the programme for the practising of this particular kind of principle by unnumbered masses of human beings. He worked out a programme, in other words, not merely for an individual, or a small group of individuals, but for a whole nation, and that is something new in the experience of man.

I can best sum up the significance of this second period of Gandhi's life, which ended on the 15th day of August, 1947, with the triumph of Indian freedom, by quoting a remarkable paragraph from a book entitled *The Tragedy of Europe* written by a great scholar, Dr. Francis Neilson. This is the way he puts it. 'Gandhi,' he says, 'is unique. There is no record of a man of his position challenging a great empire. A Diogenes in action, a St. Francis in humility, a Socrates in wisdom, he reveals to the world the utter paltriness of the methods of the statesman who relies upon force to gain his end. In this contest,

spiritual integrity triumphs over the physical opposition of the forces of the state.' That was Gandhi's triumph. That was his achievement. That marks his place in history.

The third period of Gandhi's life began on the 15th day of August, 1947 and ended only at the moment when he died on the 30th of January, 1948. This was the period when it seemed as though India was about to exercise the prerogatives of freedom by plunging into the terror and horror of a civil war. What happened is understandable enough. Here was where partition operated, and partition meant the vivisection of a nation, and those people who were called upon to suffer the agony of vivisection, in Bengal and also in the Punjab, went momentarily crazy with pain and grief. As violence and massacre swept these provinces, it seemed for a moment as though all Gandhi's teachings were in vain. I have heard people say that Gandhi in the end failed in his great mission. Gandhi himself encouraged that idea, for in the supreme humility of his spirit, he was moved to talk about his failure as well as about his sorrow. But I have insisted from the beginning, as I would insist to-day, that this last period in Gandhi's life was the greatest period of all. In my last letter to the Mahatma, written just as I was leaving India, I put it this way. 'Of course', I said, 'you have been sad, wellnigh overborne by the tragedies of recent months, but you must never feel that this involves any breakdown of your life work. Human nature cannot bear too much, it cracks under too great a strain, and the strain in this case was as terrific as it was sudden. But your teaching remained as true and your leadership as sound as ever. Single-handed you saved the situation and brought victory out of what seemed for the moment to be defeat. I count these last months to be the crown and climax of your unparalleled career. You were never so great as in these last dark hours.' I wrote those words, in token, first, of my conviction that it was the influence of Gandhi through the discipline of thirty years gone by that prevented the spread of the conflagration, so that less

than five per cent of the Indian people were involved in the riots and, less than ten per cent of India's territory, and through those dreadful days, through the vast range of Indian life, Moslems and Hindus lived peacefully side by side. And secondly, my belief that it was by Gandhi's own personal presence and influence at those places where the fire was burning the fiercest, that it was straightway extinguished! When I was in Delhi, tension was everywhere in the air, but everybody agreed, Moslem and Hindu alike, men great and men humble, that it was the presence of Gandhi that had brought peace to that great city which a few days before had witnessed the massacre of thousands of people in the public streets. Gandhi came to Delhi, thus stricken, bleeding and frightened, and as Jesus calmed the storm on the sea of Galilee, so Gandhi calmed and ended this storm of hate and madness.

And now he is dead. When his last breath had passed from his body, the newspapers tell us that his granddaughter, in whose arms he died, came to the reporters and said, 'Bapu' (a word meaning 'little father'), 'Bapu is finished'. As I read that pathetic phrase, I thought instantly of the last words of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, when he said upon the cross, 'It is finished.' But as Jesus came to his own only after the fell moment of his death and has lived serene and potent in the hearts of unnumbered millions to our own time, so Gandhi will live and assert his magic influence upon the souls and hearts of men forever. For us, however, it is finished. That ineffable presence, that sweetest of all smiles, those eyes that had depths of beauty like visions of the eternal, that infinite tenderness and grace, that lovely hospitality of friendship, it is all gone with the frail and feeble body that fell beneath the shot of the assassin's pistol.

When the news suddenly and terribly came to me, I was seized by such an unexpected convulsion of emotion that I was frightened. And all that day I wept for Gandhi in my heart. I could think of nothing but the great funeral pyre,

and the blazing flame, and the sole of Gandhi liberated into eternal light. And now after I have read the dramatic account of the burning of Gandhi's body I feel, beautifully and serenely, a kind of calm, the calm that follows after death, and the secret of which is to be found in that sense of possession of precious things which can never be taken away. Instinctively I went to the shelves of my library, and there I found what I was seeking, something near, and intimate, and very close, in tribute to my friend. A little sonnet written years ago by George Santayana, the great poet and philosopher:

With you a part of me hath passed away  
 For in the peopled forest of my mind  
 A tree made leafless by this wintry wind,  
 Shall never don again its green array.  
 Chapel and fireside, country road and bay  
 Have something of their friendliness resigned.  
 Another, if I would, I could not find,  
 And I am grown much older in a day.  
 But yet I treasure in my memory  
 Your gift of charity, and young heart's ease,  
 And the dear honor of your amity.  
 For these once mine, my life is rich with these,  
 And I scarce know which part may greater be,  
 What I keep of you, or you rob of me.

## MAHATMA GANDHI

SARVAPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

THIS PUNY figure of seven stone was a giant among men, measured by the greatness of his soul. By his side, other men, very important and famous men, big in their own way, big in their space and time, look small and insignificant. / His profound sincerity of spirit, his freedom from hatred and malice, his mastery over himself, his human, friendly, all-embracing charity, his strong conviction which he shared with the great ones of history that the martyrdom of the body is nothing compared with the defilement of the soul, a conviction which he successfully put to the test in many dramatic situations and now in this final act of surrender, show the impact of religion on life, the impact of the eternal values on the shifting problems of the world of time.]

The inspiration of his life has been what is commonly called religion, religion not in the sense of subscription to dogmas or conformity to ritual, but religion in the sense of an abiding faith in the absolute values of truth, love and justice and a persistent endeavour to realize them on earth. Nearly fifteen years ago, I asked him to state his view of religion. He expressed it in these words:

I often describe my religion as Religion of Truth. Of late, instead of saying God is Truth, I have been saying Truth is God, in order more fully to define my Religion. . . . Nothing so completely described my God as Truth. Denial of God we have known. Denial of Truth we have not known. The most ignorant among mankind have some truth in them. We are all sparks of Truth. The sum-total of these sparks is indescribable, as yet—unknown—Truth which

is God. I am being daily led nearer to It by constant prayer.<sup>1</sup>

Even though Gandhi practised this religion with courage and consistency, he had an unusual sense of humour, a certain lightheartedness, even gaiety, which we do not associate with ardent religious souls. This playfulness was the outcome of an innocence of heart, a spontaneity of spirit. While he redeemed even the most fugitive and trivial moment from commonness, he had all the time a remote, a far-away look. The abuses and perversities of life did not shake his confidence in the essential goodness of things. He assumed, without much discussion, that his way of life was clean, right and natural, while our way in this mechanized industrial civilization was unnatural.

Gandhi's religion was an intensely practical one. There are religious men who, when they find the troubles and perplexities of the world too much for them, wrap their cloaks around them, withdraw into manasteries or mountaintops and guard the sacred fires burning in their own hearts. If truth, love and justice are not to be found in the world, we can possess these graces in the inviolable sanctuary of our souls. For Gandhi, sanctity and service of men were inseparable.

My motive (he says) has been purely religious. I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind; and this I could not do unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities to-day constitutes an indivisible whole; you cannot divide social, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity.

If Gandhi took to politics, it is because he looked upon politics as a branch of ethics and religion. It is not a

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<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan and Muirhead: *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (1936), p. 21.

struggle for power and wealth, but a persistent and continuous effort to enable the submerged millions to attain the good life, to raise the quality of human beings, to train them for freedom and fellowship, for spiritual depth and social harmony. A politician who works for these ends cannot help being religious. He cannot ignore the formative share of morality in civilization or take the side of evil against good. Owing no allegiance to the material things of life, Gandhi was able to make changes in them. The prophets of spirit make history just by standing outside history.

It is impertinent for any man to set about reforming the universe. He must start his work from where he is. He must take up the work that lies nearest to hand. When, on his return from South Africa, he found the people of India suffering from mortified pride, want, pain, and degradation, he took up the task of their emancipation as a challenge and an opportunity. No improvement, he felt, was possible without political freedom. Freedom from subjection should be won not by the usual methods of secret societies, armed rebellion, arson and assassination. The way to freedom is neither by abject entreaty nor by revolutionary violence. Freedom does not descend upon a people as a gift from above, but they have to raise themselves to it by their own effort. The Buddha said: 'Ye who suffer, know ye suffer from yourselves; none else compels.' In self-purification lies the path to freedom. Force is no remedy. The use of force in such circumstances is foul play. The force of spirit is invincible. Gandhi said:

The British want to put the struggle on the plane of machine-guns. They have weapons and we have not. Our only assurance of beating them is to keep it on the plane where we have the weapons and they have not.

He took hold of ordinary men and women, men and

women who were an incredible mixture of heroism and conceit, magnificence and meanness, made heroes out of them and organized an unarmed revolt against British rule. He weaned the country from anarchy and terrorism and saved the political struggle from losing its soul. The transfer of power on August 15, 1947, marked the end of that struggle. The fight was a clean one, it was completely free from any trace of racial bitterness or feeling. It has ended in a settlement reached in a spirit of good temper and friendliness. The credit for it is due to Gandhi.

Freedom for Gandhi is not a mere political fact. It is a social reality. He struggled not only to free India from foreign rule but free her from social corruption and communal strife. He strove for a free and united India. The hour of his triumph proved to be the hour of his humiliation. The division of the country is a grievous wrong we have suffered. Our leaders caught in a mood of frustration, tired of communal killings, which disgraced the country for some months past, anxious to give relief to the harassed, distraught multitudes acquiesced in the partition of India against their better judgement and the advice of Gandhi. The New Delhi celebrations on August 15 Gandhi would not attend. He excused himself and was engaged in his lonely trek in the villages of Bengal, walking on foot, comforting the poor and the homeless, entreating them to remove from their hearts every trace of suspicion, bitterness and resentment. The division of the country has not resulted in communal peace but has actually increased communal bitterness. The large migrations, the thousands of people wandering to and fro, weary, uprooted, heavy laden, the mad career of communal violence, worst of all the spiritual degradation all around, suspicion, anger, doubt, pity, grief, absence of hope filled Gandhi with deep sorrow and led him to devote the rest of his life to the psychological solution of this problem. His fasts at Calcutta and Delhi had a sobering effect but

the evil was too deep to be cured so easily. On his seventy-eighth birthday, October 2, 1947, Gandhi said:

With every breath I pray God to give me strength to quench the flames or remove me from this earth. I, who staked my life to gain India's independence do not wish to be a living witness to its destruction.

When last I met him, early in December 1947, I found him in deep agony and determined to do his utmost to improve the relations among the communities or die in the process. He met his death while engaged in this great work. It is the cross laid on the great-hearted that they exhaust themselves in sorrow and suffering so that those who come after them may live in peace and security.

We are too deeply entangled in our own past misdeeds; we are caught in the web we had ourselves spun according to the laws of our own twisted ethics. Communal differences are yet a wound, not a sepsis. But wounds have a tendency to produce sepsis. If this tendency is to be checked we must adhere to the ideals for which Gandhi has lived and died. We must develop self-restraint; we must refrain from anger and malice, intemperance of thought and speech, from violence of every kind. It will be the crown of his life work, if we settle down as good neighbours and adjust our problems in a spirit of peace and good will. The way to honour his memory is to accept and adopt his way of approach, the way of reconciliation and sympathetic adjustment of all differences.

When the strife of these days is forgotten, Gandhi will stand out as the great prophet of a moral and spiritual revolution without which this distracted world will not find peace. It is said that non-violence is the dream of the wise while violence is the history of man. It is true that wars are obvious and dramatic and their results in changing the course of history are evident and striking. But there is a struggle which goes on in the minds of men. Its results are not recorded in the statistics of the killed and the injured.

It is the struggle for human decency, for the avoidance of physical strife which restricts human life, for a world without wars. Among the fighters in this great struggle, Gandhi was in the front rank. His message is not a matter for academic debate in intellectual circles. It is the answer to the cry of exasperated mankind which is at the cross-roads, which shall prevail, the law of the jungle or the law of love? All our world organizations will prove ineffective if the truth that love is stronger than hate does not inspire them. The world does not become one simply because we can go round it in less than three days. However far or fast we may travel, our minds do not get nearer to our neighbours! The oneness of the world can only be the oneness of our purposes and aspirations. A united world can only be the material counterpart of a spiritual affinity. Mechanical makeshifts and external structures by themselves cannot achieve the spiritual results. Changes in the social architecture do not alter the minds of peoples. Wars have their origins in false values, in ignorance, in intolerance. Wrong leadership has brought the world to its present misery. Throughout the world there seems to be a black-out of civilized values. Great nations bomb one another's cities in order to obtain the victory. The moral consequences of the use of the atom bomb may prove to be far more disastrous than the bomb itself. The fault is not in our stars but in ourselves. Institutions are of little avail unless we are trained to obey our conscience and develop brotherly love. Unless the leaders of the world discover their highest human dignity in themselves, not in the offices they hold, in the depth of their own souls, in the freedom of their conscience, there is no hope for the ordered peace of a world-community. Gandhi had the faith that the world is one in its deepest roots and highest aspirations. He knew that the purpose of historical humanity was to develop a world-civilization, a world-culture, a world-community. We can get out of the misery of this world only by exposing the darkness which is strongly entrenched in men's hearts

and replacing it by understanding and tolerance. Gandhi's tender and tormented heart heralds the world which the United Nations wish to create. This lonely symbol of a vanishing past is also the prophet of the new world which is struggling to be born. He represents the conscience of the future man.

Gandhi has paid the penalty of all who are ahead of their time, misunderstanding, hatred, reaction, violent death. 'The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.' The struggle between light and darkness, between love and hate, between reason and unreason which is at the heart of the cosmic is shown up by this most moving tragedy of our age. We made Socrates drink death; we nailed Jesus to the Cross; we lighted the faggots that burnt the mediaeval martyrs. We have stoned and killed our prophets. Gandhi has not escaped the fate of being misunderstood and hated. He has met his death facing the forces of darkness of ultimate unreason and through it has increased the powers of light, love and reason. Who knows if Christianity would have developed had Jesus not been crucified? Gandhi's death was a classical ending to his life. He died with the name of God on his lips and love in his heart. Even as he received the bullet wounds he greeted his murderer and wished him well. He lived up to what he preached. Possessed and inspired by the highest ideals of which human nature is capable, preaching and practising fearlessly the truth revealed to him, leading almost alone what seemed to be a forlorn hope against the impregnable strongholds of greed and folly, yet facing tremendous odds with a calm resolution which yielded nothing to ridicule or danger, Gandhi presented to this unbelieving world all that is noblest in the spirit of man. He illumined human dignity by faith in the eternal significance of man's effort. He belongs to the type that redeems the human race.)

We have killed his body but the spirit in him which is a light from above will penetrate far into space and time and inspire countless generations for nobler living.

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

yad-vad bibhutimat sattvam  
srimad urjitam eva va  
tad-tad evavagaccha tvam  
mama tejo amsasambhavam.

Whatever being there is endowed with glory, and grace and vigour,  
know that to have sprung from a fragment of My splendour.

—Bhagavadgita, X. 41.

*An address delivered in All Souls College, on Sunday,  
February 1, 1948.*

# DEFENCE THROUGH AHIMSA

SATISCHANDRA DAS GUPTA

## THE VALUE OF ARMED DEFENCE IN INDIA

WHAT will happen if we attain *swaraj* to-day by our own efforts, or the British have to depart from India due to international pressure—were the questions often asked prior to August 1947. They were not merely academic questions. To clash with Britain and win was one thing and for her to leave India in her own interest was quite another. What would be India's fate if, under the latter circumstances, Britain departed from India, leaving her to her own fate? Some Englishmen had raised this question. The question was, of course, raised with a view to pointing out India's utter helplessness. After keeping India in thralldom for nearly two hundred years, and depriving her of all power in all possible ways, Britain may well have asked the question. The question, however, remains even today. It is necessary for us, in order to solve our defence problems, to ask ourselves the question: 'Well, you wanted *swaraj*, and now that you have attained it, how will you defend yourself?' Such questions are also not new. Replies generally given to them are not reassuring. Those so far given are:

1. True, we do not possess war materials, but we shall purchase them.
2. True, we are not experts in modern warfare, but we shall learn the technique.
3. We have quarrels with no nation, so none will invade us.

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This article was written and published in Bengali in 1939 when the Sino-Japanese war was in progress and the international situation different from what it is today. Certain verbal alterations have been made in the text without disturbing the main argument which, along with the principles discussed, may hold good even today.—Ed. V. B. Q.

4. The major powers are so busy quarrelling among themselves, that they have neither the strength nor the desire to invade India.

The above replies are all fallacious and can be refuted.

1. It is not possible for us to purchase war materials and use them when necessary. The whole world is today the slave of rapaciousness and gold. The invader can pay more than we shall for war materials and thus prevent our getting them. Unarmed countries can only arm themselves in exchange of their freedom.
2. How long will it take us to learn the technique of modern warfare? If the invader does not give us so much time, we shall again lose our freedom.
3. True, we have no quarrel with any nation, but that will not save us. If our weakness tempts the invader, it is this very helplessness that will be the cause of invasion.
4. How can we say that the major powers do not have their eyes on India? Who could swear that Japan, Italy, Germany or America would not invade India? The minerals, forest products and oil in Burma, and the minerals and agricultural products of India are all necessary for warfare. If a war breaks out elsewhere, then any one, who can, will collect these by force from helpless India. Collecting by force means depriving one of one's freedom.

It will be seen from the above that the replies suggesting the methods of self-defence are not irrefutable. No fighter for freedom can remain satisfied with these. Then how will India, freed from Britain's clutches, defend herself against an invader? The only reply is by *satyagraha*.

#### SATYAGRAHA—THE ONLY DEFENCE

We shall have to devise a means for defence which will not depend on another nation's being too busy or on its

freedom from greed. It cannot also be forecast that we shall become experts in warfare. That we shall become adepts at any future date is open to grave doubts, because our history gives evidence to the contrary. India has many times been defeated by the enemy from without. But, even in defeat, India has converted the conqueror into an Indian and has made him her own. Chengiz Khan, Mohammed Ghorī or Alexander could not conquer India permanently. The language in which Matthew Arnold unfolds the soul of India sounds almost like an eulogy:

The East bowed low before the blast  
In patient deep disdain  
She let the legions thunder past  
And plunged in thought again.

Who can deny this tradition of India? This quality remains even today, though India lost a lot of it under Britain's all-pervading spell. Gandhiji gave new birth to this old tradition. In the field of politics, Asoka adopted *ahimsa* and gave up his imperialistic aims. This great gift of Asoka gave India the first place in the world in the development of man. His policy reached its perfection in this suppression of imperialistic tendencies. That is past history. Till very recently India was the slave of a major foreign power and as such was merely an instrument that served its interest. The way to freedom, as shown by Gandhiji, is merely the Buddha's philosophy of *ahimsa* applied to politics. *Ahimsa* is the mainspring, the vessel and the controlling force of *satyagraha*. By the all embracing application of *ahimsa*, we have not only freed ourselves from this evil reign, but shall also be able to defend that freedom.

उमा जे रामचरणरत, बिगत काममदक्रोध ।

निज प्रभुमय देखहि जगत, केहिसन करहि बिरोध ॥<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Uma (he who has dedicated himself at the feet of Rama) who is freed from passion, vanity and acrimony, who sees the Lord everywhere in this world; how can he have any discord with anyone?

This philosophy, which influences society, may also influence the individual. This speaks of the ideal state of affairs. *Satyagraha* attracts us to this ideal and leads us forward. The mode of application of *ahimsa* differs in different cases. In politics the application of *ahimsa* does not mean that we shall not have to suffer any loss or make any sacrifices for the furtherance of our ends. On the contrary sacrifice is essential. In ordinary battles one kills another and the winner is he who is the greater adept at killing. In the clash between the violent and non-violent, too, the latter has to be prepared for suffering and death. The difference is that in one case one has to kill or get killed, while in the other case it is necessary to be prepared for death, and if necessary to die, in the attempt to resist evil without killing.

#### APPLICATION OF Ahimsa—ITS RESULTS

If India believes in *ahimsa*, then free India will perforce have to take recourse to *ahimsa* in defending herself against foreign aggression.

Viewed as a weapon, *ahimsa* is better than any death-dealing weapon of war. And if the leaders of war really believe this, then they shall devote their energies more to the building up of an expert non-violent army and the devising of the various means of the application of *ahimsa* than to the building of bombers. India, now freed from bondage, will also lead the world towards *ahimsa*. The world will set out to establish one religious state. The question of one's personal religion—whether one is a Hindu, Muslim or Christian—will no longer lead to any strife. Religion will be a lake on the various banks of which people will bathe and be refreshed. There will also be no warfare between nations. The names will remain India, Italy, or Germany as at present, the rulers will be of the people's choice, but they will join together to form one world and, reigning supreme over all, will be He who is the King of Kings.

भूमि सप्तसागर मेखला ।  
एक भूप रघुपति कोशला ॥<sup>2</sup>

That is the inner meaning of the present principle of 'legitimate and peaceful means' of the Congress and that is the ultimate end of that principle.

If the leaders recognise this as the fundamental principle, if they accept *ahimsa* as the basic factor in politics, then they shall make India—shorn of all death-dealing weapons—a great and powerful nation. They shall be strong enough to face calmly the fighting forces and war preparations of the world. The weapon of *ahimsa* shall replace the weapons that kill. It is essential that the armoury for a non-violent struggle be in the fighters' hearts just as it is necessary to manufacture arms in factories and to appoint mechanics for that purpose in preparation for an armed conflict. Every soldier shall have to learn the use of this weapon. This is of course difficult. For India to arm herself suitably in order to defend herself against the combined armed might of exploiting countries like England, Germany, Italy, Japan, etc., is not only difficult—it is impossible. It is easier for India to fight these countries in the way described above than by armed conflict. It is difficult, but it is the only way. What else can India and other smaller defenceless countries do but to accept eternal bondage? We shall not have to approach foreign countries in the doubtful hope of getting weapons of war. These may not be available even for cash. With a little attempt the weapons of *ahimsa* can be manufactured in the hearts of men and women. This does not depend on extraneous matters.

Some may consider this absurd day-dreaming. But everybody has seen the political changes in India brought about in the last few years by a limited application of *ahimsa* and and the small sacrifices made by a large number of people.

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<sup>2</sup> Raghupati Ram of Koshala was the One King of the earth girdled by the seven seas. (Ram was the Lord of the Universe as well as the King of Koshala).

If *ahimsa* is applied in a larger degree, all our aspirations will, without doubt, be fulfilled and the country will be able to defend herself.

If India is invaded, the *satyagrahi* will want both to live and to defend his country ; but he will not kill another in order to live. If he dies in making the attempt, death will be welcome. The whole nation may become extinct in pursuing this noble ideal. This very extinction will nevertheless help to lead human society towards the ideal world. It is definite that no one can enslave a nation of *satyagrahis*. It is very difficult for an outside force to defeat and subjugate those who do not value life or property.

#### ALL ARE COMBATANTS IN A NON-VIOLENT BATTLE

In violent warfare the people of a country are generally divided into two sections—the combatants and the non-combatants. The usual idea is that the combatants of a country will not inflict any loss on the non-combatants among the enemy. The reason for this is that when the combatants win, the non-combatants among the defeated will accept their supremacy without struggle. This principle, however, is often breached in practice. The victor tries to terrorise the victim by a show of his terrible strength. Thus even the non-combatants are attacked and brutally done to death. It is by destroying the liberty of the defeated country by these methods that imposition of foreign rule over its citizens becomes easy. It then becomes possible to make them say and do whatever the aggressor wishes by shackling them with the bonds of slavery. The citizens are so demoralised after defeat that they lose even the elementary instinct of protecting their lives and property by organised resistance. This atmosphere helps the conqueror to impose his will on them with ease. But if there is no such section in the country as a 'non-combatant'—if every one turns 'combatant'—then the invader can conquer it only by slaughtering the whole nation. The policy and ultimate end of expand-

ing one's empire is to defeat the 'combatants', enslave the 'non-combatants' and utilise the latter to serve one's own interest. But if the whole populace turns 'combatant', then the aggressor loses all interest in attacking a country. In violent warfare, however, it is not possible for the whole populace to become 'combatants'. Not only are there not sufficient weapons to arm them, but they must all become adepts at such warfare. This is impossible in practice. That is why the aggressor gets a chance to become victorious in violent warfare. If *ahimsa* is accepted as the mode of defence, then every one can take part in it. A nation thus pledged to *ahimsa* is ever armed with the most powerful weapon in the world and all the brute forces of the world put together cannot destroy it. A nation pledged to *ahimsa* will either defend itself successfully or die in the attempt, but shall never become a slave. It shall die but shall not allow its liberty to be destroyed. No force will want to fight a nation in which this determination and this strength exist, because that fight will not satiate their greed. Even if there is a fight, the victory will go to the *satyagrahi*, whether alive or dead.

### Satyagraha—INDIA'S TRADITIONAL WEAPON

The weapon of *satyagraha* is India's own. This weapon was being wrought in the workshop of the Buddha, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna. Gandhiji brought it to its present tremendous dimensions and had successfully demonstrated its strength by repeated tests.

But doubt persists. There is no reassurance if the heart does not accept the doctrine of *ahimsa*. The question arises—'If China had taken the vow, if the Czechs did the same, would that not amount to suicide? Would not that mean that Japan would continue to destroy China with various weapons and the Chinese, instead of using arms to defend themselves, have continued to die in even larger numbers?' The case is not so simple. Japan was not only

destroying the bodies of some Chinese—she was taking the lives of some and was subjugating the rest to various indignities. The Japanese placed their flag in the hands of thousands of Chinese civilians and forced them to salute it. In the regions of China then under Japanese occupation the residents were made to sing the praise of Japan. Japan could have killed the Chinese *satyagrahi*, but would never have made him sing her victory. The reason for this is clear. The weapons of violence—the bomb, the gun, the sword, the intrigue—are all weapons of the weak. People armed with these weapons become helpless if they fail. Helplessness leads to fear and fear to surrender. The weapon of *ahimsa* does not give one the opportunity to be afraid; one faces the enemy, alone or together with others, and fights him to the last. If China had this strength, Japan would have realised in a short time that she would never be able to conquer and exploit China. Japan would then have left the Chinese shores instead of wasting so much energy in the effort of conquering her.

#### WEAKNESS ATTRACTS THE RAPACIOUS

Whenever a nation realises that a certain nation is unable to defend itself, it turns its greedy eyes on the latter. That is why all nations increase their armies and parade them before a possible aggressor to show him that it is not only capable of defending itself, but if the aggressor nation attacks, it is liable to be counter-attacked. Such a mentality, however, fails to remove the desire for expansion; it only results in a mad race for greater control of brute strength. Given the opportunity one nation applies this strength on another and weaker nation; bloodshed follows; either a decision is reached, or some settlement—honourable or otherwise—is arrived at. History abounds in such instances. If China had followed the path of *ahimsa*, she would not have had to commit suicide—Japan would have had to give up and go away or to mount guard over the desolation

that once was China. It would have been Japan who would have committed suicide by wasting her armies against non-violent China. China, too, might not have been destroyed in the attempt, and even if she were destroyed, she would have died in order that the rest of the world may live. It must be clearly understood here that non-violent war is also war, and not suicide, and China might in all probability have won the war. It is not my intention to state that China could have in a moment adopted the method of *ahimsa*. That needs preparation. China did not then possess the time or the conditions necessary for such preparation.

People risk their own lives to save that of a drowning man. Sometimes both die in the attempt. But the world eulogises the man who risks his life to save another's and considers him as the ideal. What is true of the individual is equally true of the nation. That is immortality. Craven people will say that the real thing is to live—even as slaves. The brave man will ever be prepared to lay down his life to save his honour. It is not necessary to establish anew the principle that extinction is preferable to existence as a despised slave nation. The *satyagrahi's* death in defence of his *dharma* is not suicide. It is a grave error to suppose that one must die and that the will to live is not present in *satyagraha*. There is a greater chance of successfully defending oneself by *ahimsa* against a powerful and violent enemy than of succeeding in a violent battle against one who is more violent. Some reasons of this have been stated above. The practical side is now being shown.

#### NON-VIOLENT DEFENCE IS NOT SUICIDE

It is generally found that during a war both the aggressor and the defending nations suspend all other activities. To fight, to prepare for the same, and to procure the necessities of war become the only activity. Recruitment of soldiers, procurement and manufacture of arms, arrange-

ments for the care of the wounded, transport, supplies—these occupy all the attention of the people. The king or the President urges the people to this end. The leaders make a great effort and create a war hysteria in the country. The people are imbued with the spirit of war. Great excitement prevails. If such is the case in violent warfare, where life is uncertain, then why should not a continued effort at consciousness be made in the case of non-violent battles *because* life and death are uncertain quantities? In these circumstances the non-violent nation will prepare itself for *satyagraha*. The principle and procedure of complete non-co-operation with the aggressor will have to be decided on. The country will resist all the evil actions of the aggressor, keeping within the limits of *ahimsa*. If the enemy uses poison gas, the scientist's help will have to be sought. If the railways of the country are found likely to help the enemy, its use by them should be made impossible so that they are made to post sentries at every yard of the railway line. The enemy shall be forced to bring all his supplies from his own country—nobody in the invaded country supplying anything to him either voluntarily or under duress. If necessary, railways and other means of quick transport will have to be voluntarily destroyed. Not a grain of food should be made available to the enemy. He can only procure food by force, but the *satyagrahi* will give him no opportunity of suddenly appearing and looting the food. He will remain ever vigilant and destroy all food and other necessities before they fall into the hands of the invader. If it is not possible for him to remain in the place at that time, he shall migrate to the jungles. In such emergencies the *satyagrahi* will give up civilised life and make the invader's life impossible. He shall learn to strike a balance between the discarding of civilised life on the one hand and fearlessly defending his life and property on the other. The whole nation will have a taste of the wonderful experience of non-violent defence and of non-co-operation through this training. It may be stated here that India

has once had a taste of non-co-operation to a certain degree. She has once at least seen the wonderful development of man through the combination of fearlessness and suffering.

It is clear now that surrendering of life to the armed invader is not the only method of the *satyagrahi*. There are other things to do. The question may arise here—'If, as hinted above, all modes of quick transport are destroyed to hinder the enemy, then how will contact be maintained with one's own people? There will be no co-ordination and the whole effort will be in vain due to this lack of central direction.' This fear is without foundation. When modes of quick transport and exchange of news are destroyed, it is the enemy that will be rendered ineffective, and not the *satyagrahi*. Many people have had this experience during the last *satyagraha* movement. The present writer was one of them.

#### AHIMSA IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

The responsibility of conducting the Civil Disobedience movement in Bengal was vested on me for a time. The police frequently visited my camp at that time, broke everything there, arrested the volunteers, but did not arrest me for a long time. I could not bear the atrocities perpetrated on the volunteers and asked the police to arrest me first as I was the person in charge. The magistrate used to tell me that my time had not yet come. Thus, while people were being arrested all around me, I myself could conduct the *satyagraha* with new men for four months. There was no contact with other provinces, and, sometimes, with the different parts of Bengal. The post office could not be used for sending news. I tried to send news by messenger through the railways. Even that was prevented. Contact with the all-India office was completely severed. An American press representative visited us at that time. He said he was representing several newspapers and wanted to know from me the news of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. I told him I did

not always have news of my own province and from the other provinces very rarely. I also told him that central control and co-ordination was not necessary for *satyagraha* as it was in violent warfare. On the other hand, decentralisation should be followed as far as possible in *satyagraha* just as centralisation was accepted as the essential need in violent warfare. If *satyagraha* is centrally controlled, the enemy can destroy the whole movement by destroying the centre. If there is no centre, if the various branches carry on their work according to the basic principle, then the enemy finds it impossible to stamp out the movement. This is a special feature of non-violent struggle. I told the press representative that I did not worry if I got no news from the other provinces. I was carrying out my work according to the local conditions. Therein lay my success and through me the success of the movement. He was amazed. He found it difficult to understand how this vast movement was being directed without any contact with the centre. He was possibly influenced by my faith later and realised to a certain extent that central direction was not indispensable for this movement.

#### LIMITATIONS OF SECRECY

In the later stages of this *satyagraha* movement, this principle ceased to exist as an appreciable quantity. In the end secret methods were being adopted with the apparent intention of maintaining contact. The leaders probably failed to stamp out secrecy in spite of all their attempts at preventing an underground movement. Coming out of prison after a year I found the whole movement had degenerated into an underground movement. In some cases fear begets secrecy; *ahimsa* and cowardice are self-contradictory. I am of the opinion that the spread of secrecy will render a non-violent struggle innocuous. The first and second Civil Disobedience movements have strengthened this belief. I mention it here because it is difficult, in non-violent

struggles, to decide on what actually to do in the practical field. Stereotyped and commonplace discussions do not help solve the problem.

We did not succeed then due to our own weakness. We have realised somewhat the method by which this weakness can be eradicated, but have not progressed far in this direction due to our own lack of faith and a spirit of sacrifice. Viewed from outside, the Congress is daily gaining in strength, but the purity that marked the Congress movement in the beginning has become greatly sullied today. Notwithstanding the extent and stability of the power of the Congress, its strength in *satyagraha* has decreased in direct proportion to the departure from this, its inner strength. We shall maintain our independence only by an increase of this strength. There is no other way.

#### NON-VIOLENT DEFENCE—THE CONGRESS CREED

It is only by fulfilling its constructive programme that the Congress will be able to fight and defend the country through *ahimsa*.

If a large number of people lack the faith in the basic principle of the Congress, if they maintain that *ahimsa* is needed at the time of non-co-operation and the attainment of freedom and *himsa* for the defending of that freedom, then that *ahimsa* is the *ahimsa* of the coward—it is false *ahimsa*. The only purpose it serves is to bring out the fact that we had lacked the necessary arms and ammunition to fight Britain. This false *ahimsa* will only dupe us—it will not give us the strength to defend ourselves now that Britain has left India. There is no consistency of thought in the support of the principle of the non-violent struggle waged by the Congress to attain freedom and also feeling nervous for want of violent weapons of war for defending that freedom. For the purpose of defence, whether in India, China, Czechoslovakia or Abyssinia, the principle of *ahimsa* is the same.

## WHEN THE HEART IS HARD

WHEN the heart is hard and parched up, come upon me  
with a shower of mercy.

When grace is lost from life, come with a burst of song.

When tumultuous work raises its din on all sides shutting  
me out from beyond, come to me my lord of silence, with  
thy peace and rest.

When my beggarly heart sits crouched, shut up in a  
corner, break open the door, my king, and come with the  
ceremony of a king.

When desire blinds the mind with delusion and dust,  
O thou holy one, thou wakeful, come with thy thunder.

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

## GURUDEV AND GANDHIJI

KRISHNA KRIPALANI

DURING his last visit to Santiniketan in December, 1945, Mahatma Gandhi made the following remarkable confession: 'I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev and myself but ended with the glorious discovery that there was none'. The glorious discovery was mutual. To Gandhi the poet was also Gurudev, a great teacher of mankind, and to Tagore this politician was truly a Mahatma, a great soul, a redeemer of mankind. But the common man cannot share this discovery. He is dazzled by the one or the other. Most admirers of Tagore have been critical of Gandhi and most devotees of Gandhi have shown but a poor understanding of Tagore. And no wonder. To the outward eye no two personalities could be more unlike than Tagore and Gandhi. Their names conjure up two different worlds, as different from each other as is the valley of Kashmir from the plains of Sind, different in the soil, climate and fruit of their genius. They thought, felt and lived in ways that seemed to challenge each other. Even in physical appearance they appeared as belonging to different racial stocks.

And yet, beneath their many differences, was a basic kinship, an affinity of spirit which had made them, each in his own way, the voice incarnate of India. As individuals, with their limitations of temperament, their fads and their fancies, they were poles apart. But to know them truly we must look upon them not as mere individuals, but as representative Indians, as instruments of awakened, renascent India. That is how they knew and understood each other, and that is how history will judge them. They, more than any of their contemporaries, had redeemed India's past and had released the latent creative energy of her spirit. Their lives were a drama of India's

spiritual sensibility reacting to the challenge of the West. They had neither turned their faces away from the West, nor were they overwhelmed by its glamour and seeming might. In them alone East met West on equal terms. They took much from the West, and gave back as much, if not more.

Unlike Tolstoy and Lenin, who seem to challenge and repudiate each other and to represent a balance of contrary forces in the development of Russian civilization, Tagore and Gandhi confirm and uphold each other and represented a fundamental harmony in Indian civilization. It is this basic harmony, this oneness of the spirit of their genius, this parallelism in the *sadhana* of their life, running through a multitude of differences, that was so remarkable as to invite a study. Otherwise it would seem odd to compare a poet with a politician, an artist with a saint. What is significant, however, is not how much they differed in their temperaments, in their mental equipments, their emotional reactions, but that, seeming to differ so vastly, how akin they were in their basic character, in the spirit of their life-long *sadhana*, even in the contents of the messages they have given to their people, howsoever much their language and accent may vary.

#### BIRTH AND UPBRINGING

From a middle-class *Vaisya* family of a minor State in Kathiawad to an aristocratic Brahmin family of zemindars in Calcutta—at that time the political, commercial and intellectual capital of India—is a far cry. Compared with young Gandhi, young Tagore had all the advantages of birth and upbringing. Bengal was at that time in the full tide of a literary, social and religious renaissance. Among a stalwart band of pioneers were Rabindranath's grandfather Dwarkanath, known as the Prince because of his generous and magnificent ways, the poet's father Devendranath, known as the Maharshi because of his high spiritual qualities, the eldest brother Dwijendranath the eminent philosopher and an elder brother Jyotirindranath, whose career,

like that of a comet, trailed a dazzling path for a brief moment. In such an atmosphere and in such a family was Rabindranath Tagore born and brought up, handsome and gifted, fed on the very milk and honey of India's best culture. The influence of the Maharshi, whose life remains recorded as an authentic chapter in the annals of the experiments of India's sages with Truth, formed the spiritual background of Rabindranath's education. This saved the Indian Goethe from the natural paganism of a poet's creed and made him in spirit a kinsman of Gandhi's.

What of young Gandhi? Though born in a respectable and well-to-do family of upright parents, he was not the favourite of fortune like Tagore on whom Nature seems to have showered every possible gift and blessing. Shy and reserved, of no extraordinary distinction in appearance or talent to mark him off from others, he gave no promise in his boyhood of the superhuman stature he was to attain later. It was as though Nature, jealous of the delicate and precious instrument she was fashioning, wanted to ward off the evil eye and so hid it in a commonplace sheath. Not even the instrument itself was aware of the herculean mission that awaited it in the world outside. No consciousness of genius haunted it, no prophet's frenzy ruffled the placid surface of an uneventful boyhood, no passionate longings forced their way out of the deep caverns of the soul. He was spared all premature strain of that overwhelming consciousness of his destiny, which has been the making and also the unmaking of many geniuses and prophets, till his mind had ripened and was able to bear the strain lightly, without pride and without aggressiveness. It is true that a deep sense of loyalty to his parents, of devotion to duty, of truthfulness, and an unwillingness to think ill of others were evident even in the little schoolboy, but in the setting in which he was born and brought up, these qualities were not perhaps extraordinary; nor did they give any hint of the dynamic mind of one of the world's greatest revolutionaries.

As children both Tagore and Gandhi were very shy and avoided the company of their school-mates and hurried back home as soon as school was over—'afraid', as Gandhi said, 'lest any one should poke fun at me'. He says, further:

As a rule I had a distaste for any reading beyond my school books. The daily lessons had to be done because I disliked being taken to task by my teacher as much as I disliked deceiving him.

Young Tagore had no such conscience towards his studies and did not mind feigning illness to get rid of the conscientious teacher who would turn up even on a rainy day. But he had an inordinate passion for reading anything he came across outside his school texts. Once when he came across a copy of Jaydev's *Gita Govinda*, written in Bengali script, he went through the whole of it, reciting the lines sonorously, though he knew no Sanskrit then and hardly understood a verse. But the music of the sound enchanted him and he copied out the whole book for his use. He would sit and recite page after page of Kalidasa's *Meghduta* without understanding a line.

The child was wonder-eyed and revelled in the beauty he could see in even the most commonplace sights. 'Looking back on those days', he tells us, 'the thing that recurs most often in my mind is the mystery that used to fill both life and world. . . . It was as if nature held something in her closed hands and was smilingly asking us: "What do you think I have?"' Already, at the age of fourteen, the young boy was writing patriotic poems and reciting them at the Hindu Mela, which was then the nucleus of the nationalist Movement in Bengal. One of them was a biting satire on the pageantry and pomp of the Delhi Durbar held by Lord Lytton, while famine was raging all around. About the same age or a little earlier young Gandhi, too, was experiencing the first stirrings of patriotic zeal and was putting

through, quietly and in utter secrecy, his first experiments with truth.

For the early life and adventures of these two extraordinary children of Mother India, we have no other authentic record save what they themselves have given us in their autobiographies. While Gandhi, with his scrupulous truthfulness and characteristic humility, has bared before us the most intimate details of his personal life, Tagore has drawn a curtain of reticence over them. Gandhi's personality is integrated in one single pursuit of truth and he keeps the doors of his life open as a laboratory for experiments that are of enduring value to all humanity. Tagore has screened from public gaze the inner recesses of his emotional development. The complexities of that development, the pitfalls lightly tripped over on the way, the scars burnt into the soul of one who was at once so sensitive and so vital will ever remain a mystery to us. We saw only the 'eagle-sized lark' soaring in the sky and flooding the earth with its wealth of music and of wisdom. Of the struggles of the unfledged bird in its nest we have little knowledge.

### BASIC CREED

Both were deeply religious. Each had a different vision, but both were sustained by the same faith in the absolute reality of the Spirit that pervades this universe and in the capacity of men to realize his oneness with it. Both strove, each in his own way, to attain this ideal.

Gandhi writes in his autobiography:

What I want to believe—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing and all my ventures in the political field are directed to this same end.

Says Tagore:

I have ever loved Thee, in a hundred forms and  
climes, in age after age, in birth after birth.

And, if nothing else remains,

Let only that little be left of me whereby I may  
name Thee my all.

Both were modest and truthful enough to admit that they had not attained the goal. 'I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him', confesses one. 'The song that I came to sing remains unsung to this day,' cries the other. 'Thou wert hidden in my inmost heart, but I failed to see Thee.' Both sought Him through love: one as Truth revealed in the Good, the other as Beauty revealed by Harmony. 'The stream which comes from the infinite and flows towards the finite—that is the Truth, the Good,' says Tagore. 'Its echo which returns to the infinite is Beauty and Joy.'

Neither sought his God in the privacy of a temple or in the solitude of a cave, or in the piety of a ritual. Nor did they follow the well-defined traditional Indian path of psychic *sadhana*, popularly known as *Yoga*. Both sought Him in this world of humanity, one through active and dedicated service of his fellow-creatures, the other through a direct, intuitive realization of his affinity with every aspect of creation. 'Your idol is shattered in the dust to prove that God's dust is greater than your idol,' says Tagore.

Gandhi was the warrior and the crusader of India's new humanity, as Tagore was its herald and its bard. Tagore knew his limitations and could confess with humility:

When I try to bow down to Thee, my obeisance  
cannot reach down to the depth where Thy feet rest  
among the poorest, the lowliest and the lost.

He could admonish the priest to seek his God not in the dim twilight of the temple but in the open and dusty road

of human ordeal, where the tiller is tilling the ground and the stone-breaker is breaking stones. He saw Him there, he saluted Him there, but could not keep Him company there. Gandhi saw Him there, sought Him there and kept Him company there.

There was a strong element of an ascetic, an eternally self-denying *tapasvi* about Gandhi. He rejoiced in renunciation and burned up his senses in the fire of his spirit. Tagore was a poet and a lover of life. He loved, tended and cherished the senses as a musician cherishes his instruments:

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation,  
 I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds  
of delight.  
 No, I will never shut the doors of my senses,  
 The delight of sight and hearing and touch will bear  
Thy delight.

His personal life was simple and clean, at times bordering on the austere, as those who lived with him know. But he knew that the Hindu spiritual tradition had overstated the case for self-denial and had made life seem a bleak desert. He wanted to correct the balance and teach his people the art of enjoying life without vulgarizing it:

Alas, my cheerless country,  
 Donning the worn-out garment of decrepitude,  
 Loaded with the burden of wisdom,  
 You imagine you have seen through the fraud of  
creation.

But though voluntary self-torture as a spiritual exercise was repugnant to his nature, he knew and valued the necessity of suffering as a purifying force in life. He could agree with Gandhi that

Suffering is the mark of the human tribe. It is an eternal law. . . .No country has ever risen without

being purified through the fire of suffering, which is the one indispensable condition of our being.

But he would have added that capacity for joy is an equally indispensable condition of our being. Nor indeed would Gandhi deny the fact. They differ only in their emphasis.

Far as I gaze at the depth of Thy immensity  
I find no trace there of sorrow or death or separation.  
Death assumes its aspect of terror  
and sorrow its pain  
only when, away from Thee,  
I turn my face towards my own dark self.

Gandhi is the apostle par excellence of non-violence. It is the breath of his life, and it is the breath that may one day save humanity from its nightmare of hatred and slaughter. But few people know that even before Gandhi had worked out and applied the possibilities of his faith and creed, Tagore had hailed the advent of such an apostle. In his drama *Prayaschitta* (Atonement, 1909) based on his novel *Bau-Thakuranir Hat* (1883) and again in his drama *Mukta-Dhara* (The Waterfall, 1922) he had created in Dhananjai Vairagi almost a prototype of Gandhi. Here is a character who, as his name suggests, has renounced all personal possessions and has taken upon himself the leadership of his unarmed people in a no-tax campaign against the cruel exactions of the king. Here is a regular *satyagraha* on a mass scale, based on truth, non-violence and fearlessness.

In 1927 Tagore wrote a poem on the Buddha, which might with equal appropriateness be addressed to Gandhi.<sup>1</sup>

Tagore, as is well known, had taken an active part in the early days of the Swadeshi agitation in Bengal. His poems, songs and speeches had roused and inflamed the fervour of patriotic passion in Bengal and had hardened

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in this issue as an introductory poem.—ED. V. B. Q.

the will of the people to resist. But while he could rouse feelings and stimulate thinking, as perhaps no one else could, he could not control or direct the action of the people. That was one great difference between him and Gandhi, a born leader of men. When the popular agitation in Bengal found its natural overflow in violent activities, Tagore shrank from it in disgust and, withdrawing from the arena, sought consolation in his Muse.

Nevertheless, it is astonishing to recall how closely the programme of national activity that he had laid down and expounded to his people as early as 1904 in his lecture on Swadeshi Samaj and in his presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Pabna, in 1908, resembles the programme of constructive activity later framed and organized by Gandhi. Non-co-operation, Hindu-Muslim unity, anti-untouchability, village reconstruction, revival of handicrafts, rural education with its emphasis on training through hard physical labour, village self-government and volunteer organizations—all these were advocated by him in the language of passionate sincerity. Though born and brought up in a city his heart was with rural India. From its landscape his muse drew its unfailing inspiration and to its neglected, voiceless masses his heart ever turned.

To the dumb, languishing and the stupefied  
must we give voice ;  
These hearts, wilted, withered and broken must be  
galvanized with new hope ;  
Beckoning them we must exhort,  
lift up your heads this very instant and stand united,  
They before whom you quake in fear, quake more  
than you in their guilt,  
They will take to their heels the moment you are  
roused.

Though Gandhi had become the spearhead of Indian nationalism and Tagore was looked upon as the prophet of

internationalism, Gandhi's mission of liberation embraced entire humanity, and Tagore's love of his country was as deep-rooted and as intense as Gandhi's.

Says Gandhi:

I am wedded to India, because I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world.... My religion has no geographical limits. I have a living faith in it which will transcend even my love for India herself.

Again:

For me, patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. My patriotism is not exclusive. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. . . . A patriot is so much less a patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian.

Tagore's patriotism needs no advocate. His songs were on the lips of Bengal's martyrs face to face with the gallows. He wanted the freedom of India, not that she may shut herself up in her isolation, nor that she should lord it over other nations, but that she may be in a position to offer to the world her best gifts and be able to accept from others the best they have to offer. He resented India's political subjugation because to continue existence as 'the eternal rag-picker at other people's dustbins' is the greatest shame:

All humanity's greatest is mine. The infinite personality of man can only come from the magnificent harmony of all human races. My prayer is that India may represent the co-operation of all the peoples of the earth. For India unity is truth and division evil.

No two Indians of recent times have raised their country's stature so high, given their countrymen so much to be proud of and revealed to them the greatness of their heritage and the possibilities of their future so vividly as these two.

And yet neither of them ever flattered their people's vanity or encouraged national or racial self-complacency. They have been the most unsparing critics of their people's failings. 'If Indians have become the pariahs of the empire,' said Gandhi, 'it is retributive justice meted out to us by a just God.' Said Tagore:

O my hapless country those whom you have insulted  
 Their humiliation will drag you down to their  
 own level.

Both Tagore and Gandhi accepted their country in its entirety, heightening its nobility and cleansing, purifying and redeeming its squalor. Both understood by *swaraj* something far more positive than mere freedom from foreign dominaton. Both were jealous guardians of moral values. Both were passionate believers in the sanctity, the inviolable right, of the individual's personality and were therefore mistrustful of the ever-increasing claims of the State over the individual in a modern industrial society. Both were uncompromising and vehement preachers against the dangers of a materialist and mechanical civilization. Tagore hated the spirit of the Machine Civilization which ruthlessly grinds the individual under its wheels in the name of efficiency, though he was an admirer of Western science and believed that, properly controlled, the machine could and should be made to serve the needs of man without making him its slave. Gandhi was even more radical in his scepticism of the worth of an industrial civilization to human welfare: 'I would not shed a tear if there were no rail-roads in India'. It is true that lately he was willing to compromise on that issue, in the sense that he would not stand in the way of industrial development in India, if Indians wanted it. But he had an ascetic's deep-seated fear of multiplying men's wants by making it easy to cater to them.

Though friends of the poor, neither was a socialist in the accepted sense of the term. Both believed that it was

possible to persuade the rich to regard themselves as trustees for the poor. Their insistence on moral values as the guiding factor in human conduct and their profound faith in human nature, coupled with their mistrust of the impersonal and non-human nature of the State, made it inevitable for them to think so. Though Tagore developed considerable sympathy and admiration for Soviet Russia towards the end of his life, it is doubtful if he ever believed in Socialism. Gandhi's theory of trusteeship, on the other hand, was so flexible, and his concern for the interest of the dispossessed so inflexible, that he might have found it quite possible and consistent to advocate, or at any rate to tolerate, the expropriation of propertied interests without compensation.

Both were anti-fascists to the core and openly and passionately denounced Japanese aggression in China, even when British diplomacy was openly and shamelessly condoning it. It is a remarkable coincidence that both of them expressed readiness to go to Japan to plead with the people there to desist from the wrong they were doing. Such was their faith in human nature and their universal sympathy that they never believed that a people could be intrinsically and wholly wicked, even when their governments were pursuing wicked ends. Wars, according to them, were due not to the specific wickedness of this nation or that, but to the general fever of greed and violence generated by the industrial and materialist civilization of the West. The only way to prevent wars is to abjure violence, restrain greed and respect the supremacy of moral values.

Says Gerald Heard:

Modern arms, whoever employs them, can destroy civilization. Modern regimentation—*sine qua non* of the efficient employment of modern arms—must destroy all humaneness. It does not matter under what flag, under which slogan, you employ such methods.



and even while assuming the leadership of the struggle, Gandhi could say:

We must remove hatred for the British from our hearts. At least in my heart there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact, I am a greater friend of the British now than ever I was. The reason for this is that at this moment they are in distress. . . . It may be that in a moment of anger they might do things which might provoke you. Nevertheless, you should not resort to violence and put non-violence to shame.

In the whole history of mankind's struggle for freedom, there is no instance of such majesty of moral discipline.

#### PERSONAL CONTACT AND PUBLIC CONTROVERSY

Only for a brief interval during and after the first Non-cooperation movement was there anything like a misunderstanding and opposition between these two apostles of India's regeneration. It is not surprising. When two such gigantic personalities, at once intense, vital and original, rub shoulders, what is surprising is not that they once challenged each other in an open controversy, but that throughout their careers their relationship was marked by a spirit of deep respect, understanding and friendliness. Even when they differed, they were one in their spirit of mutual reverence.

Their personal contact dates from 1915, when Gandhi first visited Santiniketan where the members of his Phoenix Asram had already found a temporary home on their return from South Africa. During that first visit Gandhi, true to his practice, had suggested to the teachers and students that they should dispense with the services of the cooks and other servants and do all the work themselves. When the suggestion was put to the poet, he told the boys, 'This experiment contains the key to *swaraj*.' The experiment, however, did not last long, but the Santiniketan

Asram still observes March 10 every year as Gandhi Day, when all servants, including the sweepers, are given a holiday and their work is done by the students and teachers.

They met again at the end of 1917, when the poet recited his famous 'India's Prayer' at the opening session of the Calcutta Congress, and Gandhi attended a stage performance of *The Post Office* at the Tagore House.

In 1919 came the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy in the Punjab. When the news, despite the strict military censorship, trickled down to Bengal, Tagore was the first to make a public protest. It is interesting to compare the letter Tagore wrote to the Viceroy on 30 May, 1919, resigning his knighthood, with the one written by Gandhiji on 1 August, 1920, returning to the Viceroy his Kaiser-i-Hind medal.

Tagore wrote:

The time has come when the badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand shorn of all special distinctions by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings.

Said Gandhi:

I can retain neither respect nor affection for a Government which has been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend its immorality.

Both were moral protests couched in words of great dignity and passion. But while Tagore's protest ended with the renunciation of his title, Gandhi's inaugurated the Non-co-operation movement. It is surprising that Tagore, who was the first to make such a noble and dramatic gesture of non-co-operation, should have failed to appreciate the significance of the mass movement launched by Gandhi. Gandhi met him in Calcutta in September, 1921. No record exists of the interview, but it seems that the two parted, agreeing to differ.

The best statement and exposition of these differences is given us by Romain Rolland—a foreigner who was great enough to appreciate and interpret these two. We cannot do better than quote his words:

The controversy between Tagore and Gandhi, between two great minds, both moved by mutual admiration and esteem, but as fatally separated in their feeling as a philosopher can be from an apostle, a St. Paul from a Plato, is important. For on the one side we have the spirit of religious faith and charity seeking to found a new humanity. On the other we have intelligence, free-born, serene, and broad, seeking to unite the aspirations of all humanity in sympathy and understanding.

Tagore always looked upon Gandhi as a saint, and I have often heard him speak of him with veneration. When, in referring to the Mahatma, I mentioned Tolstoy, Tagore pointed out to me—and I realize it now that I know Gandhi better—how much more clothed in light and radiance Gandhi's spirit is than Tolstoy's. With Gandhi everything is nature—modest, simple, pure—while all his struggles are hallowed by religious serenity, whereas with Tolstoy everything is proud revolt against pride, hatred against hatred, passion against passion. Everything in Tolstoy is violence, even his doctrine of non-violence.

Yet it was inevitable that the breach between the two men should widen. . . . At the time he (Tagore) was not only the 'poet' but the spiritual ambassador of Asia to Europe, where he had asked people to co-operate in creating a world university at Santiniketan. What an irony of destiny that he should be preaching co-operation between Occident and Orient at one end of the world, when at that very moment non-co-operation was being preached at the other end.

Non-co-operation clashed with his way of thinking, for his mentality, his rich intelligence, had been

nourished on all the cultures of the world. . . In other words, just as Goethe in 1813 refused to reject French civilization and culture, Tagore refuses to reject English civilization. While Gandhi's doctrine does not really set up a barrier between the East and the West, Tagore knows it will be interpreted as doing so, once Hindu nationalism is stirred. Tagore saw the danger of mental despotism loom near, and in *The Modern Review* of October, 1921, he published a real manifesto, 'The Call of Truth', which was a cry of revolt against this blind obedience. The protest was particularly strong because it was preceded by a beautiful homage to the Mahatma.

Tagore's noble words, some of the most beautiful ever addressed to a nation, are a poem of sunlight, and plane above all human struggles. And the only criticism one can make of them is that they plane too high. . . In his answer to Tagore, Gandhi displays more passion than he has so far shown in the controversy. On October 13, 1921, in *Young India*, his stirring rejoinder appears. Gandhi thanks the 'Great Sentinel' for having warned India as to the pitfalls ahead. He agrees with Tagore that most essential of all is the maintenance of a free spirit. . . Tagore is the sentinel who warns of the approach of the enemies called Bigotry, Lethargy, Intolerance, Ignorance and Inertia. But Gandhi does not feel that Tagore's misgivings are justified.

Here is Gandhi's reply:

To a people famishing and idle the only acceptable form in which God dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. . . Hunger is the argument that is drawing India to the spinning wheel. The poet lives for the morrow, and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds in the early morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. Those birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had

flown the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching birds who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. I have found it impossible to soothe suffering patients with a song from Kabir.

Give them work that they may eat. Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin?—may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the source of every coin that finds its way into your pocket, and you will realize the truth of what I write. Every one must spin. Let Tagore spin, like the others. Let him burn his foreign clothes, that is the duty today. God will take care of the morrow. As it says in the Gita, 'Do right'.

'Dark and tragic words these!' comments Romain Rolland. 'Here we have the misery of the world rising up before the dream of art and crying, "Dare deny me existence!" Who does not sympathize with Gandhi's passionate emotion and share it? And yet in his reply, so proud and so poignant, there is nevertheless something that justifies Tagore's misgivings: *sileat poeta*, imposing silence on the person who is called upon to obey the imperious discipline of the cause. Obey without discussion the law of Swadeshi, the first command of which is, Spin!

What a sad and unnecessary controversy! Here was the poet challenging the very man for whose advent he had waited and prayed, whose very methods he had anticipated and blessed in his poems, speeches, dramas and novels. And Gandhi should have been the first to admit that the Great Sentinel had more than earned his right to his bread and did not need to spin to justify his existence. However, the poet was silenced. Had he not admonished himself:

If you can't march in step with your compatriots in the greatest crisis of their history, beware of saying they are in the wrong, and you in the right. But give up your place in the ranks, and go back to your poet's corner and be prepared to meet ridicule and public disgrace.

Retiring into his poet's corner, he wrote the drama *Mukta Dhara* (The Waterfall), which was the highest tribute he could have paid to Gandhi and his crusade of non-violence. So ended the controversy which only brought into relief the innate greatness of the two and the enduring affinity of their spirits.

Years passed, Gandhi lay in Yeravda Prison, determined to resist with his life the iniquitous Communal Award. The epic fast was to awaken the conscience of his people and of their alien rulers. On 9 September, 1932, before the fateful day dawned, he remembers his great fellow-spirit and pens these words to him:

Dear Gurudev—This is early morning, 3 o'clock of Tuesday. I enter the fiery gate at noon. If you can bless the effort, I want it. You have been to me a true friend because you have been a candid friend often speaking your thoughts aloud. . . If your heart approves of the action, I want your blessing. It will sustain me. I hope I have made myself clear. My love.

But before the letter was despatched, the poet's telegram was handed to him:

It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity. . . Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love.

On the 24th the poet left for Poona and was at Gandhi's bedside in the Yeravda Prison in time to receive the happy news that the British Government had relented and Gandhi

had won. Before the fast is broken he sings to Gandhi his beautiful song, a favourite of Gandhi's, 'When the heart is dried and parched up, come with your shower of mercy.'

They met again in March, 1936, in Delhi and two years later in Calcutta, on which occasions Gandhi came to the poet's aid and collected funds to help Visva-Bharati tide over its difficulties. Their last meeting—the most touching and most beautiful of all—took place in Santiniketan in February, 1940, when 'this great soul in a beggar's garb,' to quote the poet's description of him, came to see him. A few months later when Tagore lay in Calcutta, hovering between life and death, Gandhi sent his personal secretary, Mahadev Desai, to see him. As Mahadev Desai handed him Gandhi's letter, the poet's hands shook with emotion and tears trickled down his cheeks. He who never wept in sorrow wept in joy. The friendship of these two to the end, despite the many differences that seemed to divide them, will be remembered by their countrymen as an undying testimony to their greatness. Had one of them been a little less great, they would have fallen out. It was so easy to misunderstand each other, with their sensibilities and their ways of living so sharply in contrast, their fields of activity so widely separated, and each surrounded by admirers, not as tolerant and understanding as the Masters. That they did not do so is a measure of their stature.

## THE SANTINIKETAN PILGRIMAGE

PYARELAL

GANDHIJI'S last pilgrimage to Santiniketan in 1945 was replete with sweet and sad memories. As he remarked to the heads of the various departments of Santiniketan he was by no means a stranger in Santiniketan. Even before he returned to India from South Africa he had been closely watching the happenings in India and the careers of the stalwarts of Indian nationalism of that era. Among them was Gurudev. Later, Deenabandhu Charlie Andrews became a link between the two and on Gandhiji's return from South Africa in 1915, the Phoenix Asrama party which had preceded him found asylum in Santiniketan. Gandhiji joined them a little later. It was then that the personal bond between him and Gurudev was forged. The latter had told him on that occasion: 'I am a singer. I do not want to meddle in the administrative side of Santiniketan. You have a free hand to do what you like.' And for the time that Gandhiji was there he attempted to introduce some basic reforms beginning, according to his wont, with a few elementary things like sanitation, kitchen, care of the sick and so on. Then he went and settled down in Gujarat. The bond with Gurudev however continued to grow stronger as the years rolled on and during Gandhiji's visit to Santiniketan in 1940 the two came very close indeed. With a premonition perhaps of his approaching end Gurudev had on that occasion laid on Gandhiji's shoulders two burdens, firstly to do something for the finances and secondly to take a closer interest in the administrative affairs of the institution. Gandhiji made as definite a promise as he could in regard to the first. In regard to the second he had told him that no matter where he was he would try to interest himself in the affairs of Santiniketan.

The present visit was in discharge of that obligation. It was going to be his first visit to the institution after the passing away of Gurudev. As the special train which the Bengal Government had thoughtfully placed at his disposal for the occasion drew up at Bolpur station at evening it was nearing prayer time. The pavement in front of Gandhiji's carriage door had been decorated with artistic designs drawn in white and *arati* was performed by a sister from Bolpur after the orthodox Indian style. Everything bore the mark of art joined to simplicity. A quiet dignity characterized the demeanour of men and women volunteers, who stood in a double row to make an avenue for Gandhiji to pass through. There was no shouting, no jostling for *darshan*. The whole atmosphere was suffused with a deep but subdued emotion.

From the station he proceeded straight to the prayer ground in Santiniketan where all the inmates of the Ashrama had assembled for the evening prayer. Dusk was falling. The air was tense with expectancy. A high platform had been erected for Gandhiji in the middle of the prayer ground, which consists of a clearing surrounded by thick groves. In front burnt the incense. Overhead the interlacing festoons of green leaves and buntings scarcely fluttered in the breathless stillness of the evening. The soft music of Gurudev's song that was sung added to the solemnity of the hour. After the prayer Gandhiji gave a short discourse in the course of which he likened Gurudev to a parent bird with outspread wings brooding over its nest. 'Under the warmth of his wings Santiniketan has been nurtured to its present size. Bengal is full of his songs. He has glorified the name of India throughout the world not by his songs only but also by his pen and brush. We all miss the warmth of his protecting wings. But we must not grieve. The remedy lies in our own hands.'

'True monuments to the great,' he continued, 'are not statues of marble, bronze or gold. The best monument is to adorn and enlarge their legacy. A son who buries

underground his father's legacy or wastes it will be adjudged unworthy of his inheritance.

'Whilst on Rathi Babu and his colleagues must primarily rest the sacred duty of making Santiniketan truly worthy of Gurudev's great tradition, that duty rests no less upon all those who, though they may not be directly connected with Santiniketan, received the warmth of Gurudev's wings.

'All mortals must quit this world one day. Gurudev has gone, having achieved all that a human being can expect to in life. His soul now rests in peace. It is for you, now, the workers and inmates of Santiniketan—as indeed all those who are imbued with Gurudev's spirit—collectively to represent his ideal.'

Prayers over, he was taken to Gurudev's mud hut Shyamali, so named because of its dark colour. Gurudev was somewhat of a spiritual nomad. He could not stay in one place, for any length of time. Thus, he was by turns, to mention only a few, in Udayana, Udichi, and Punashcha or 'postscript', coming as it did as an afterthought—all clustering in the area known as Uttarayana.

Gandhiji had asked Santiniketan people not to put themselves out in looking after his party but to treat them as one of themselves. This the boys and girls of Santiniketan literally did, making us feel perfectly at home in their midst. By a happy coincidence Sri Manilal Gandhi, who formed one of the Phoenix Asrama group that had been adopted into Gurudev's family three decades ago, was in Gandhiji's entourage and provided, as it were, a living link between the present and the past. The weather was glorious, the air bracing and the memory of the *vaitalik*, or the morning and the night singing parties, going the round of the Asrama under the full winter moon, chanting Gurudev's favourite songs and ending with a final chorus and salute under the window of the room in Udichi, where he used to sit and work is not one easily to be forgotten.

The next day was Wednesday. The inmates of Santi-

niketan congregate for common prayer in the Mandir on every Wednesday. During Gurudev's lifetime he used to deliver his weekly sermon on that occasion. At the request of Kshiti Babu, Gandhiji addressed them there on 19 December when he further amplified his previous day's message.

He had noticed that during the prayer some of the boys did not sit erect. Some were fidgety, others listless. He pulled them up for this as he had done before on the previous evening. 'The boys and girls of this institution should carry the *imprimatur* of Santiniketan in the littlest of their little acts,' he told them. 'The war has ended, but peace has not come upon earth. It has only meant the triumph of the Allied arms over the Axis Powers. The world is in a conflagration of unrest. Millions in Europe to-day are faced with the grim prospect of death due to starvation and cold during the winter. Nearer at home, in Bengal things have been no better. It was Gurudev's mission to deliver the message of peace to an aching world. The boys and girls of Santiniketan should go forth into the world as the warriors of peace battling for it so that Santiniketan might become an abode of *santi* or peace in fact, as it is in name. This requires that you should have a living faith in God. As a piece of marble becomes the vehicle of the sculptor's genius, so must the spirit of Gurudev live and propagate itself through you.'

From the Mandir Gandhiji proceeded to visit Sri Mukul Dey's studio and art gallery where Sri Dey has collected over five thousand pieces of rare Indian art, including nearly 1500 pieces of Gaganendranath, a lot of them rescued from private houses, second-hand dealers and the ravages of white ants. He showed some of his canvases on which he had copied some of the immortal paintings of Ajanta caves that were in danger of being lost, owing to the ravages of time and weather no less than neglect and ignorant interference. He had brought them over from Calcutta when there was danger from air-raids and there

they lay in heaped profusion converting his tiny hut into a veritable Ali Baba's cave of art treasures. It was his ambition that these should be acquired on behalf of the nation and form the nucleus of an Indian national gallery of art.

Owing to lack of time Gandhiji could not visit Cheena-Bhavana where over 50,000 Chinese texts are housed, the major part of them being a gift from the Chinese National Government. Some of them, we were told, were no longer available in China, being burnt or destroyed during the war. Remarked Prof. Tan Yun-Shan, the head of Cheena-Bhavana, to Gandhiji, 'There was a time when some of the Indian Buddhist texts were available only in the Chinese, the originals in India being lost. Now the process is reversed'.

Gandhiji could not give more than half an hour to Nanda Babu's Kala-Bhavana, where the witchery of some of Nanda Babu's masterpieces entranced him. He was in raptures too over the wonderful toys made by Abani Babu almost out of nothing. For instance, a dried up piece of twig was converted into the likeness of a mad poet gloriously drunk, riding a wild horse; a piece of rotten wood was turned into a bird nestling in its nest; pieces of straw were turned into a lifelike grasshopper. It seemed as if the alchemy of his art could transmute almost anything, even refuse, into a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. It grieved Gandhiji to learn that the artist himself was bed-ridden in Calcutta.

On his return to Calcutta he especially sent me to him with a personal note to enquire about his health and to tell him that he must live long to give more of his beautiful art to India. Abani Babu holds a place all his own in the renaissance of Indian art, marking as he does a break with the realism of the Western school of painting and a return to the Indian style with its emphasis on the soul which it seeks to interpret instead of mere outward form.

Abani Babu was in a very weak condition of health. Even the exertion of walking from his verandah to the

visitor's room had brought on an attack of breathlessness. There was a growth of several days, perhaps weeks, on the chin. But in the eyes the fire burnt brighter than ever. He was overwhelmed by Gandhiji's affection and concern for him. 'I did his likeness in 1921, when he visited Gurudev at the latter's house. Charlie Andrews also was there,' he remarked with a retrospective look in his face. 'But I have never met the Mahatma face to face. How can a person like me have that good luck? It needs a lot of *punya*.' After a pause he proceeded: 'How few fully realise what Mahatmaji's coming has meant to India—the difference between the India that was before him and the India of today.' And to illustrate his observation he sent for a trilogy of paintings which he had done in 1921, depicting three stages in the moral and spiritual evolution of a servant who had actually been in his service. In the first he is shown just as he was when he first came from his village home in search of service—ill clad, starved, fever-wracked, with a stupid hang-dog look in his face. Then comes the non-co-operation movement. He begins to read newspapers. The light of intelligence begins to dawn on his face. In the third he has become a full-fledged khaddarite. He has donned the white cap. There is a volunteer's tricolour badge on his shoulder and a look of proud self-respect on his face. He feels several inches taller spiritually. 'He is one of the millions like him,' he concluded. 'His history epitomises the history of India, metamorphosis under Mahatmaji's gospel of Charkha and non-violence. That is why I worship the Mahatma.'

On the 19th Gandhiji performed the foundation laying ceremony of Deenabandhu Memorial Hospital. The auspicious mark on his forehead on the occasion was put by two Santals, one of them being a woman. Equally happy was the choice of the song from Gitanjali that was sung:

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet  
where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

A note of grim stoicism rang through Gandhiji's reply. Charlie Andrews whom the people of India had affectionately given the title of Deenabandhu in grateful recognition of his unremitting championship of the cause of the poor and the downtrodden had been like a blood brother to him. There was not a thought which Deenabandhu did not share with him and yet he could not grieve over his death:

'Birth and death are the obverse and reverse of the same coin,' he observed. 'They are not distinct. They are different aspects of the same thing. But out of our ignorance we welcome the one and shrink from the other. This is wrong. Mourning over the death of dear ones, especially those like Charlie Andrews and Gurudev who have done their part so nobly and well has its roots in our selfishness. Deenabandhu is blessed in death as he was in life. Death of people like him cannot be an occasion for sorrow. Speaking for myself, I may say that I have almost forgotten what it is to mourn over the death of friends and dear ones and I want you to learn to do likewise.'

## II

When a great and towering personality like Gurudev passes away leaving an orphaned institution behind, the question always arises as to who can or should take his place? A successor of an equal calibre is rarely if ever available. Santiniketan was the child of Gurudev's poetical inspiration. It had not been built according to a cut and dried plan. It had gradually grown. While Gurudev was there he served as the living nexus between the various departments and activities of Santiniketan. They got naturally linked up through his all-enveloping and co-ordinating personality. What could be done to restore that inspiration? Gandhiji's reply was that Gurudev's could not be made to order. No single individual could take his place but they could all corporately represent his

ideal if each one put the institution first in all things and himself last.

On the evening of 19 December, the heads of the various departments met Gandhiji in an informal conference to place their difficulties before him and seek his guidance. Gandhiji asked them not to hesitate to tell him if the institution had fallen from the ideals which Gurudev had put before them. 'Regard me as a blank slate. So far I have had only hearsay and hearsay has very little place in my life. Solid facts are what I want. Without a full knowledge of facts I shall be able to do little to help you.'

Noticing some hesitation on their part he resumed: 'It is not that you have nothing to say. That would mean that the institution is perfect. But nothing in this world is perfect. Speak to me freely about the shortcomings. Good things speak for themselves, not the bad things, at any rate, not to me.'

Nanda Babu broke the ice. The number of students in his department had been steadily increasing. Kala-Bhavana had begun as a studio. But it had now become a teaching institute. Teaching and administrative work made heavy inroads upon his time and art suffered. The chief difficulty was to find a suitable successor who would command the willing allegiance of his colleagues and at the same time worthily represent the spirit of the institution.

Several other difficulties were mentioned. Rathī Babu spoke about the finances. Kshiti Babu complained that youngmen of promise who came there for training were lured away by the prospect of distinction and remuneration when their training was complete. 'Santiniketan has become like the proverbial crow's nest hatching cuckoo's eggs.' Anil Babu complained that the university department of Visva-Bharati had queered their pitch. Sri Bibhuti-bhusan Gupta mentioned the complication arising from the admission of day scholars. Sri Krishna Kripalani voiced the dilemma of the whole group when he complained that they felt like the crew of a vessel without the helmsman.

'We have no clear conception as to whither we are drifting, what we want to be.'

After they had all finished Gandhiji began:

'I have followed every word of what you have said with the keenest interest and I have learned a lot from it. I do not propose to make detailed observations on what has been said or to give expression to all that is welling up in me just now but shall confine myself to one or two remarks of a general character.

'As I listened while Nanda Babu and Kshiti Mohan Babu were speaking, I said to myself: 'Here is a real difficulty but it is a difficulty of our own making.' If a person conducts a big department he is expected to transmit what he stands for to some one who can be termed as his successor. Yet it is the dominant cry of these two stalwarts that they are unable to find a suitable successor for their respective departments. True, these are departments of a special character. I know these departments and I know, too, Gurudev's views about them. Speaking generally, may I venture to suggest that there is no difficulty but can be overcome by *tapascharya*? It is almost an untranslatable word, the nearest approach to its true meaning being perhaps 'single-minded devotion'. But it means much more than that. Whenever, in the course of my multifarious activities, I have been confronted with a difficulty of this character, this single-minded devotion has solved my difficulty in a manner which I had never expected. During my twenty long years in God-forsaken South Africa, where under circumstances of the worst kind conceivable I found my God, it was my invariable experience that the right helper appeared at the right moment.

'It is my conviction which I arrived at after a long and laborious struggle that Gurudev as a person was much superior to his works or even this institution where he soared and sang. He poured his whole soul into it and nurtured it with his life's blood and yet I dare say that his greatness was not fully expressed by it or through it. That

is perhaps true of all great and good men—they are better and greater than their works. If, then, you are to represent that goodness or greatness for which Gurudev stands but which he could not express fully even through this institution, you can do it only through *tapascharya*.

‘There is a remarkable string of verses in the Tulsi Ramayana to the effect that what is not possible through other means becomes possible through *tapascharya*. This is said with reference to Parvati. Narada had prophesied that she would have for her companion-in-life one who answered to the description of Shiva. If instead of Shiva those characteristics were met in the person of a rogue her life would be ruined. How to avert such a calamity was the problem and it is in that context that the verses to which I have referred come. I commend these verses to you for your careful perusal. Only you will have to strip them of their orthodoxy.

‘Finances were mentioned by you in the course of discussion. I will plead with you to dismiss from your thoughts the word ‘finance’ altogether. I am convinced that lack of finances never represented a real difficulty to a sincere worker. Finances follow—they dog your footsteps if you represent a real cause. Here, let me utter a warning. A worker may be real and yet the cause he represents may not be real. His handicap in that case will continue. There are, of course, seeming exceptions. The world is full of fools and successful rogues. But speaking of sincere men and women, it is my faith that if their cause is as worthy as their means, the handicap of finance need never deter them or damp their ardour. It is a big thing you have undertaken and in future you may have to undertake still bigger things and the question will be raised, ‘What about the finances?’ I would plead with you in that event not to waste a thought on finances and you will find that the difficulty lies somewhere else rather than in the lack of finances. Set it right and the finances will take care of themselves.’

To Sri Bibhutibhusan Gupta Gandhiji said: 'Yours is a common difficulty. You cannot ride two horses at the same time. If you mix day scholars with full-time students, the former will overshadow and spoil the training of the latter. Your institution was not designed for the mixture.'

'Then it was said by Krishna Kripalani,' continued Gandhiji, 'that they did not know what they were aiming at or stood for, what the sum-total of the energies of Santiniketan and Sriniketan signified. My answer is that the ideal before you is not to represent Bengal or even India; you have to represent the whole world. Gurudev's claim was not smaller than that. He stood for humanity as a whole. He could not do that unless he represented India with its destitute, dumb millions. That should be your aspiration as well. Unless you represent the mass mind of India you will not represent Gurudev as a man. You may represent him as a singer, as a painter, or as a great poet but you won't represent him, and history will say of Gurudev that his institution was a failure. I do not want history to give that verdict.'

Rathi Babu had asked that Gandhiji should allot to Santiniketan a longer period of stay every year. 'I agree,' replied Gandhiji, 'that if my claim that I am one of you is to be fully vindicated I ought to be here in your midst for a longer time. I would love to do so. But my future dispositions are in the hands of God.'

The discussion was resumed on the next day when he had a meeting with the workers and members of the staff of the various departments. 'I want to hear from your own lips what inspires you to be here and what are the difficulties that confront you,' he told them, and with that prefatory remark invited questions. As some of them did not know Hindustani well or at all he gave the replies in English. But he warned them that the next time they met him they would have to speak in Hindustani, at any rate they would not find him speaking to them in any other

language than Hindustani. Here are the questions and answers:

*Q:* Should Santiniketan allow itself to be drawn into political work?

*Gandhiji:* I have no difficulty in saying that Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati ought not to be mixed up with politics. Every institution has its limitations. This institution should set limitations upon itself unless it is to be cheap. When I say that Santiniketan should not get mixed up with politics, I do not mean that it should have no political ideal. Complete independence must be its ideal, as it is that of the country. But that very ideal would require it to keep out of the present-day political turmoil. I was asked this question when I was here thirty years ago and the reply I then gave was the same as I have given to-day. In fact it applies with even greater force to-day.

*Q:* In order to make Visva-Bharati really an international university, should we not try to increase the material resources of the university and provide more facilities and ordinary comforts of life to attract scholars and research workers of outstanding merit from all over the country?

*Gandhiji:* By material resources I suppose you mean finance. Let me then say that your question is addressed to a person who does not swear by material resources. 'Material resources' is after all a comparative term. For instance, I do not go without food and clothing. In my own way I have tried—more than perhaps any other man—to increase the level of material resources of the average man in India. But it is my firm conviction that Visva-Bharati will fail to attract the right type of talent and scholarship if it relies on the strength of the material resources or material attractions that it can offer. Its attraction must be moral or ethical, or else it will become just one out of the many educational institutions in India. That was not what Gurudev lived and died for. I do not mean that creature comforts should not be provided to the staff and

workers who work here. There are ample material comforts in evidence here already. If I stayed here longer and had my way they might be considerably reduced. As Visva-Bharati progresses and more and more gifts and donations begin to pour in, in due course it will be able to provide more attractions to scholars and research workers, if it wants to. But if I were asked for advice I would say: 'do not yield to this temptation'. Visva-Bharati must take its stand on the advancement of moral worth. If it does not stand for that, it is worth nothing.

*Q:* What must be done so that the institution might not lose its high moral appeal. What remedy do you suggest for it?

*Gandhiji:* Every one of you should understand the significance of moral worth. Moral worth is easily distinguished from material worth. The one leads to devotion to moral value, the other to Mammon worship. What distinguishes man from the four-footed beast is merely the recognition of moral worth, *i.e.*, the greater the moral worth of a person the greater his distinction. If you believe in this ideal, you should ask yourself why you are here and what you are doing.

Every worker must have, of course, food, clothing, etc., for himself and his dependents. But you do not belong to Visva-Bharati merely because Visva-Bharati feeds, clothes and finds creature comforts for you. You belong to it because you cannot do otherwise, because your moral worth increases day by day by working for its ideals. Therefore, every defeat that crops up, every difficulty that obstructs its working, will be found to be ultimately traceable to some defect in your outlook in regard to moral worth. I have been connected with many institutions for over sixty years and I have come to the conclusion that every difficulty in their working was traceable to a defect in the understanding of moral values.

*Q:* We are trying to serve villagers. We find that at every step our activity is blocked by the social environment

in the villages. The joyless routine of life there, the stagnation and the incubus of evil social customs obstruct our efforts. Should we not work for the eradication of these before we can hope for success in our other activities, and if so how can it be done?

*Gandhiji* : Ever since my return to India I have felt that social revolution is a much more difficult thing to achieve than the political revolution, by which I mean ending our present slavery under the British rule. There are some critics who say that India cannot attain her political and economic emancipation till we get social emancipation. I regard it as a snag and a conundrum set to puzzle us, because I have found that the absence of political emancipation retards even our efforts for bringing about social and economic emancipation. At the same time it is true that without a social revolution we will not be able to leave India happier than when we were born. I can however indicate no royal road for bringing about a social revolution except that we should represent it in every detail of our own lives.

Force has been used to alter the structure of society in some countries. But I have purposely eliminated it from our consideration. So, my advice to you is: Try again and again and never say that you are defeated. Do not get impatient and say, 'the people are no good'. Rather say, 'I am no good'. If the people do not respond within the time limit prescribed by you the failure is yours, not theirs. It is thankless and laborious work. But you do not expect thanks for your work. Work that is undertaken for love is no burden—it is pure joy.

*Q*: In an Asrama does the introduction of salary system raise or degrade the ideal of the institution?

*Gandhiji*: I have no difficulty in saying that it makes no difference whether you pay a fixed salary or your expenses are paid for you. Both methods can be tried. The danger to be guarded against is this: if you pay a man his market price you do not carry out the spirit of the Asrama. We

should rather do without talent and ability, even if it is of the highest order, if it demands its market value. In other words, we should wait till talent is attracted to the institution, not for money but for something else for which the institution stands. Nor should you let the principle of 'according to want' take you even beyond market values. Salary system in Visva-Bharati is not a thing to complain of. The difficulties to which you have referred cannot be removed by mere tinkering. You must find out and remove the causes which are at the root of the defects you have in mind.

*Q:* How can we make headway against the cynicism or lack of faith that we find among the youngsters?

*Gandhiji:* I heave a sigh of despair when you ask me that question. When you find that your pupils are without faith you should say to yourself: 'I am without faith.' I have found that again and again in my own experience. And each time the discovery has been like an invigorating bath for me. The Biblical saying 'remove the beam from thine own eye before ye point out the mote in thy neighbour's' is even more appropriate in the case of pupil and teacher. The pupil comes to you to find in you something infinitely better than himself. Rather than complain, 'Oh! he has no faith, how can I implant faith in him', it would be far better that you resigned from your job.

*Q:* The intellectual tradition of Gurudev is being fairly well maintained here but I am afraid that the idealism for which he stood does not find full scope. There must be something wrong in an organization that leads to such a result. What is the remedy? Secondly, should our institution only work to make culture available to the man in the street? This is your ideal. At the same time should not there be a place where higher culture can be preserved for the initiated? This was Gurudev's ideal. Such an institution will necessarily be exclusive and for the select only. I am a follower both of yours and Gurudev's ideals and I am torn by the conflict between the two.

*Gandhiji:* To take the second question first, it is a reflec-

tion both on Gurudev and myself. I have found no real conflict between us. I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev and myself but ended with the glorious discovery that there was none.

Regarding your first question, all I can say is that the feeling, 'I am all right but there is something wrong with the institution', betrays self-righteousness. It is killing. When you feel within yourself that you are all right but everything around you is wrong, the conclusion which you should draw for yourself is that everything is all right but there is something wrong within you.

Gandhiji had allotted half an hour to the function. Just as he was preparing to leave, Srimati Indira Devi asked a final question. 'Is there not too much music and dancing here? Is there not the danger of the music of the voice drowning the music of life?' Gandhiji had no time to answer the question then. Much as he would have loved to prolong his stay in Santiniketan the mission which had brought him to Bengal peremptorily called him back to Calcutta. Reluctantly he took leave and boarded the car that was waiting for him. But his thoughts continued to linger on the scene he had left behind. From Calcutta he wrote answering Srimati Indira Devi's question as also some other questions that had been posed but which he had not the time to answer:

I have a suspicion that perhaps there is more of music than is warranted by life, or I will put the thought in another way. The music of life is in danger of being lost in the music of the voice. Why not the music of the walk, of the march, of every movement of ours and of every activity? It was not an idle remark which I made at the Mandir service about the way in which boys and girls were sitting anyhow in the Mandir. I think our boys and girls should know how to walk, how to march, how to sit, how to eat, in short how to perform every function of life. That is my

idea of music. So far as I know, Gurudev stood for all this is his own person.

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Music in Santiniketan is charming, but has the professor there come to the conclusion that Bengali music is the last word in that direction? Has Hindustani music, *i.e.*, music before and after the Muslim period, anything to give to the world of music? If it has, it should have its due place at Santiniketan. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that Western music which has made immense strides should also blend with the Indian. Visva-Bharati is conceived as a world university. This is merely a passing thought of a layman to be transmitted to the music master there.

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I do not like preparing boys and girls for university examinations. Visva-Bharati is its own university. It ought not to be in need of a charter from any government. As it is, you are giving Visva-Bharati degrees side by side with preparing students for the chartered university. You have a high ideal to live for and live up to. University degrees are a lure to which you cannot afford to fall a prey. Concessions that Gurudev made to weakness with impunity, Visva-Bharati without him cannot make. Concession to weakness began with the introduction of the orthodox matriculation examination. I was unable even then to reconcile myself to it and I do not know that we have gained anything by it. I am not now thinking at all in terms of non-co-operation. I am just now anxious for Santiniketan to represent the highest that Gurudev stood for.

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You will not have real rural reconstruction unless you begin with the basic craft, which is hand-spinning.

Weavers' art without handspinning is a dead art. You know that I pleaded for it with Gurudev ; at first in vain, later on he had begun to see what I was driving at. If you think that I have interpreted Gurudev aright in the matter of spinning, you will not hesitate to make Santiniketan hum with the music of the wheel.

## MAHATMA GANDHI AT RABINDRANATH'S SANTINIKETAN

NIRMALCHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAYA

THE GOLDEN BOOK OF TAGORE which appeared in 1931 as India and the world's homage to the Poet on the occasion of his seventieth birth anniversary opens with a message from Mahatma Gandhi. Such a happy combination of the strictest brevity and the profoundest significance is a rare triumph in the field of human words. From the distant Sabarmati Asram with only four sentences as his messengers he offered his whole heart to Rabindranath and through him to Santiniketan:

In common with thousands of his countrymen I owe much to one who by his poetic genius and singular purity of life has raised India in the estimation of the world. But I owe also more. Did he not harbour in Santiniketan the inmates of my *Ashram* who had preceded me from South Africa? The other ties and memories are too sacred to bear mention in a public tribute.

We cannot fully gauge the vast store of joy and sorrow lying behind that interrogation in the third sentence, particularly in that single word 'harbour'. The incident referred to here was the first of the many contacts that imperceptibly drew these two great pilgrims from their lonely orbits to coalesce into a remarkable unity of heart and purpose. This union of two kindred souls, so diversely gifted, is one of the most glorious and cherished achievements in the annals of our recent history. For bringing this about the nation ought to be eternally grateful to a great English minister of reconciliation, C. F. Andrews, the beloved friend of India and of these her two greatest sons in modern days.

1901-12. Santiniketan Brahma-Vidyālaya was then in that infant stage which lies between childhood and youth. Inevitably came the period of growth. Even as the sea-inspired tidal wave in a river, came the inspiration of building up a greater institution suited to the needs of all mankind within the narrower limits of the Asram. Principal Jagadananda Roy depicts this beautifully in his annual report for 1914, in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, Māgh, 1836 Saka:

We recollect how on a day similar to this with only six young *brahmacharis* the Asram was started fifteen years ago. The strength of the Asrama was very limited then—students and teachers numbered about twelve in all. Though its joys and sorrows were confined to this small household, its guardian-spirit was already beckoning the whole country to it. This is now achieved. To-day the face of the Asram is changed, more than one family from each district of Bengal have come within its household. We have students from distant Sind, Bombay and Madras. We are enjoying the benefits of a large family. We are gaining whatever can be gained from knowing others and exchanging with others our own thoughts and feelings.

It is recorded towards the end of the report:

Srijut Mohanlal [Das] Gandhi had started a school in South Africa with a few Indian students. About twenty students and teachers of that school have come over to the Asram after he left Africa and are living and receiving their education here. They have set an example to our Asram boys by virtue of their hardiness and devotion to duty.

A year before these guests came, on the occasion of *Paush-Utsav* (the anniversary of the Asram) in 1913, Gurudev's call had resounded in the Santiniketan temple.

Revealing the open and generous character of the Asram he declared in his sermon 'The Pledge of Freedom' (*Santiniketan*, Part 17):

What is the great legacy the Maharshi<sup>1</sup> has left us? The Asram, and no sect or community. Here we shall find shelter from the worship of an individual or a party. Enlivened by the memory of his saintly life we shall welcome all who may come to this home of liberty, no matter what race or country they belong to. May convention raise no bars to our receiving everybody without any respect as to what country he comes from or what faith he professes. May our minds remain free from the recorded prejudices of any sect.

Armed with Gurudev's blessings and the good wishes of the asramites, two of its young workers, Andrews and Pearson, had already delivered this message to the members of the Phoenix Settlement in South Africa (30 November, 1913), who were destined to be our guests within a year or two. Towards the end of the Satyagraha movement in South Africa when they were about to return, Rabindranath wrote in a letter (*Santiniketan*, February, 1914) to Andrews:

We are waiting for you, knowing that you are coming to us with your heart filled with the wisdom of death and the tender strength of sorrow. You know that our best love was with you while you were fighting our cause in South Africa along with Mr. Gandhi and others.

It should be noted that Gandhiji had not yet become known to the world as 'Mahatmaji'. He writes of this in his *Autobiography* in his own humorous way:

I had fortunately not yet become 'Mahatma', nor

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<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath's father Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the founder of Santiniketan Asram.

even 'Bapu' (father); friends used to call me by the loving name of 'Bhai' (brother).

November, 1914. Just a few months had passed since Andrews and Pearson returned to Santiniketan from South Africa. Suddenly Andrews received a cablegram from England, from Gandhiji, to the effect that the students of the Phoenix Settlement were returning to India. Gandhiji would be relieved if they could be fixed up in a suitable Asram.

Following the instructions of the great Gokhale, Gandhiji and his wife went to England when the Satyagraha movement came to a close and expected to be back in India before his students arrived. But the first world war started only two days before his arrival in London. He at once became engaged in an attempt to raise a volunteer corps for tending wounded soldiers from amongst the Indians settled in England. As a result he had no other means but to ask for Andrews' help. Though Rabindranath did not wholly agree with Gandhiji in his aim and methods of education yet he immediately conveyed through Andrews a hearty invitation to the students. Even the financial difficulties of the Asram that year could not discourage him. He arranged for these boy-guests to live by themselves in *Natun Bāḍi*, just by the side of his own house *Dehali*, so that they could pursue their own programme and way of life uninterrupted, without being at the same time far removed from his personal care. On their return to India the boys spent a few days at Hardwar, in the Gurukul Asram of Swami Sraddhananda, and then came over to Santiniketan. C. F. Andrews recollects this episode in *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, February 1938:

When Mahatmaji had gone to London from South Africa in 1914 he had requested me by cable to make arrangements for those boys who had lived with him there at Phoenix. They were coming to India under

the charge of Maganlal Gandhi, his nephew. Gurudev at once gave them the warmest welcome to Santiniketan, and they stayed with us very happily indeed for several months sharing the life of the Asram.

Gurudev himself was living at *Dehali*, and he offered them quarters near to it in the quadrangle which was then called *Natūn Baḍi*. They were eighteen in number, and some of them were very young indeed. Maganlal acted as 'house-father' of the whole family. These Phoenix boys used to impress the minds of our own students by their amazing industry and their eagerness to do hard field labour every day as part of their school studies.

A plot of ground was given up for this purpose just in front of the place where they were living and they sowed it with potatoes, watering it from the well. But the white ants, alas! devoured the whole crop. Gurudev used to keep a kindly oversight over them from his upper room, where he occupied a very tiny space, hardly big enough to hold his cot with its mosquito net. He loved them as his own children, and gave much of his time to their development, and they had a deep reverence and love for him in return.

In the section of Asram news in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* (Paush, 1836 Saka) the students of Santiniketan announced the arrival of their guests with great zeal:

A few students have come to India from The Phoenix Settlement School founded by the great renouncer and public benefactor, Sriji Mohanchand [Das] Karamchand Gandhi. Sriji Gandhi is now in England. Till his return 16 students will stay in our Asram. They do not take sweets, savouries and hot things, some of them do not take even milk or ghee. They are participating in every function in the Asram. Mr. Maganlal Gandhi, a nephew of Mr. M. K. Gandhi, and a teacher, are staying here as their

guardians. Amongst the boys are Mr. Gandhi's three sons.

The letter that Rabindranath wrote to Mahatma Gandhi soon after the arrival of the Phoenix School boys has recently been unearthed by the editors of *Gandhiji: His Life and Work*, published on his 75th birthday.

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

That you could think of my school as the right and the likely place where your Phoenix boys could take shelter when they are in India has given me real pleasure—and that pleasure has been greatly enhanced when I saw those dear boys in the place. We all feel that their influence will be of great value to our boys and I hope that they in their turn will gain something which will make their stay in Santiniketan fruitful. I write this letter to thank you for allowing your boys to become our boys as well and thus form a living link in the *sāadhanā* of both of our lives.

Very sincerely yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

This letter is perhaps the earliest link that opened up the valuable series of Tagore-Gandhi correspondence.

Hardly a few months passed before the Asramites came to learn from a telegram that Gandhiji had arrived back in India and was expected at Santiniketan on 17 February (1915). For some time past Gandhiji had had no information about his student-disciples. He learnt for the first time when he reached Bombay that they were living under Rabindranath's care:

It was only when I landed in Bombay that I learnt that Phoenix party was at Santiniketan. I was therefore impatient to meet them as soon as I could after my meeting with Gokhale.

It was a memorable day for the Santiniketan Asram. Rabindranath had just reached Calcutta via Silaidaha after his tour in North India. Through the spring-tide which the new ideas and measures of *Balākā* had brought about, his poetic life was blossoming anew. Life at the Brahma-Vidyalyaya and the Asram was also running high with zest for work and service to mankind. Without being dispirited by Gurudev's absence the Asram boys took every care to arrange for the reception of their guest.

On the eve of the reception the boys worked till 12-30 at night. They had worked till 10-30 the night before. They took to the work with so much joy and enthusiasm as to make it unforgettable.

This beautiful reception was arranged in the pure Indian style. The boys of the Asram did not belie the hope which Rabindranath had expressed in a letter to Andrews from Calcutta. One wonders if in this letter (18 February, 1915) Gandhiji was addressed as 'Mahatma' for the first time:

I hope that Mahatma and Mrs. Gandhi have arrived in Bolpur, and Santiniketan has accorded them such a welcome as befits her and them. I shall convey my love personally to them when we meet.

Gandhiji also records in his *Autobiography*:

The teachers and students overwhelmed me with affection. The reception was a beautiful combination of simplicity, art and love.

An interesting description appeared in a contemporary issue of the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*:

Gandhiji and his wife arrived at the Asram in the afternoon of the 17th February. A canopy was hung on the newly constructed road for his reception. There he was received with a homage of flowers and sandal-

wood paste. Srijut Bhimrao Sastri, the music teacher of the Asram, sang a song to the accompaniment of Indian music (the *sitar* and the *esraj*). Water for washing their feet was brought to them when they left the first cottage-arch and entered the second. The venerable philosopher Srijut Dwijendranath Tagore's daughter-in-law, Srimati Hemlata Debi, who is a mother to the Asram, along with other ladies here welcomed Mrs. Gandhi according to Hindu rites. From this gate they came to the inner archway. North of it an earthen seat had been built resembling the lotus. It had been modelled after the reception seats of the Vedic times. Four banana saplings and four pitchers full of water each bearing a mango sprig were placed on the four corners. Four reception trays each with five lamps upon them were also put in front of Gandhiji and his wife. On behalf of the ladies a girl garlanded the pair, put vermilion on Mrs. Gandhi's forehead and took the dust of their feet as a token of respect. Pandit Kshiti Mohan Sen and two Marathi teachers brought the ceremony to a close with the incantation of Vedic hymns and their translation into Bengali and Gujarati. Everywhere, when the guests entered an archway, Kshiti Mohan Babu chanted sanskrit slokas, translated them into Bengali, and the Marathi teachers translated them into Gujarati. At the end of the final ceremony the Asram boys sang two songs under the guidance of Srijut Dinendranath Tagore.

It may not be out of place to say that Gandhiji first met Dattatreya, better known as Kaka Kalelkar, who was to become one of his best workers, in Santiniketan. Along with Chintamani Sastri he was for the time being engaged in teaching work in the Asram.

Thus more than thirty years ago, far from the gaze of the public eye, Santiniketan, through this reception held under

the shades of her green groves, first welcomed and accepted as her own one of her best friends, and on behalf of the rest of Bengal, honoured in the right Indian way the future leader of India in the very dawn of his public life. The love and care for Santiniketan which this ceremony aroused in him remained always green in his memory. This was proved unmistakably during his last visit to Santiniketan in December, 1945.

Gandhiji's speech on the occasion is quoted below from the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, Chaitra, 1836 Saka.

The delight I feel today I have never experienced before. Though Rabindranath, the Gurudev, is not present here yet we feel his presence in our hearts. I am particularly happy to find that you have arranged for the reception in the Indian manner. We were received with great pomp in Bombay but there was nothing in it to make us happy. For there the western modes had been carefully imitated. We shall move to our goal in the manner of the east, not in the manner of the west, for we are of the east. We shall grow up in the beautiful manners and customs of India and, true to her spirit, make friends with nations having different ideals. Indeed through her oriental culture India will establish friendly relations with the eastern and the western worlds. To-day I have become very thick with this Asram in Bengal, I am no stranger to you. I also liked the distant Africa because the Indians there have not given up their national habits and customs.

Gandhiji had been travelling third ever since the Satyagraha Movement in Africa. This led to a queer episode at Bolpur station, reported in *The Modern Review*, March 1915:

Recently Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi visited Bolpur. Those who went to receive them at the railway station

searched for them in the first and second class carriages of the train. Not finding them there, the party was about to leave the station disappointed, when the guests were seen to get down bare-footed from a third class carriage. So says the *Sanjibani*.

From the station to the Asram they walked barefooted. What he writes humorously in the *Autobiography* about his dress at that time makes our recollection of the day bright and vivid:

With my kathiawadi cloak, turban and *dhoti*, I looked somewhat more civilised than I do today.

We can only imagine how the confusion mentioned above would have been worse confounded had he appeared at Bolpur station in his later garb of a single loin-cloth, which symbolized so well the spirit of sacrifice characteristic of the whole man. It was still too early for even the Gandhi cap to become fashionable.

Gandhiji had hoped to spend some time quietly in Santiniketan. But as ill luck would have it, he received a wire in the morning of 19 February, 1915, telling of Gokhale's death. Gokhale was very ill when Gandhiji had left Poona. Still, the suddenness of it stunned him. The school was closed as a mark of respect to the departed leader. In a condolence meeting over which he presided, among other things Gandhiji remarked, 'I set out to find a true hero and I found only one in the whole of India. That hero was Gokhale'. That afternoon Gandhiji along with Kasturba and Maganlal started for Poona. Andrews accompanied them as far as Burdwan. In his journey from there to Kalyan he came to know fully and at first hand the hardships of the third class passengers. In the chapter, 'Woes of Third Class Passengers' in his *Autobiography* he describes this at full length.

Three days later (22 February) on his return to Santiniketan Rabindranath met only his boy-guests. Some days later Gandhiji returned from Poona.

Then began his real stay at Santiniketan. It was no rest for him. He set out vigorously to make the best use of his time. There is an interesting account of this in his *Autobiography*:

As is my wont, I quickly mixed with the teachers and students and engaged them in a discussion on self-help. I put it to the teachers that, if they and the boys dispensed with the services of paid cooks and cooked their food themselves, it would enable the teachers to control the kitchen from the point of view of the boys' physical and moral health, and it would afford to the students an object-lesson in self-help. One or two of them were inclined to shake their heads. Some of them strongly approved of the proposal. The boys welcomed it, if only because of their instinctive taste for novelty. So we launched the experiment. When I invited the Poet to express his opinion, he said that he did not mind it provided the teachers were favourable. To the boys he said, 'The experiment contains the key to Swaraj'.

Pearson began to wear away his body in making the experiment a success. He threw himself into it with zest. A batch was formed to cut vegetables, another to clean the grain, and so on. Nagen Babu<sup>2</sup> and others undertook to see to the sanitary cleaning of the kitchen and its surroundings. It was a delight to me to see them working spade in hand.

But it was too much to expect the hundred and twenty-five boys with their teachers to take to this work of physical labour like ducks to water. There used to be daily discussions. Some began early to show fatigue. But Pearson was not the man to be tired. One would always find him with his smiling face doing something or other in or about the kitchen. He had taken upon himself the cleaning of the bigger utensils.

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<sup>2</sup> Nagendranath Aich.

A party of students played on their *sitar* before the cleaning party in order to beguile the tedium of the operation. All alike took the thing up with zest and Santiniketan became a busy hive.

The above account of the experiment by the one responsible for it records faithfully the reaction of Santiniketan to it. 'There used to be daily discussions'; so it can be assumed that such an upheaval in the Asram life was not brought about quietly and all at once. That is not possible in any institution which shows signs of life. In this connexion we are amazed to think of Rabindranath's catholicity. Though he knew that this was not *his* method he did not throw his personal influence on any side. From these daily discussions he tore himself away to Surul (now Sriniketan) and proceeded with the writing of *Phālguni* and its songs and patiently watched the trend of events in Santiniketan. May be, he was waiting for the time when the students and teachers of the Asram would discover the right course by the light of their own reason, when another man's promptings would reveal to them the promptings of their own hearts. Extracts of a letter which he wrote to his son Rathindranath about this time testify to his deep wisdom:

... There is a great unrest here about the question of cooking. Following Gandhi's advice the students are managing to cook their food. Many false and true reports have cropped up around this and there is some excitement. ... Though difficult the work has already been started. It may indeed solve our financial and many other problems. More than anything else it will be an excellent training for our students and help them to a full realization of the spirit of this Asram. The students are all enthusiasm for it; some teachers are disinclined. ... If we keep quiet for a while everything would come out all right. The complications that are in it will resolve of themselves. There cannot be any difficulty if we patiently wait. ...

And patience at last brought about an easy yet rational solution. A few days afterwards the students and teachers agreed to drop this experiment which in the sphere of education was a mixture of virtues and defects. What Gandhiji says about it is worthy of attention :

The experiment was, however, dropped after some time. I am of opinion that the famous institution lost nothing by having conducted the experiment for a brief interval, and some of the experiences gained could not but be of help to the teachers.

Very dear to Santiniketan is the memory of this first attempt to develop its Asram spirit which was the result of Gandhiji's association with it for only a few days. Phālgun 26 of every year is observed in Santiniketan as Gandhi Punyāha in memory of this experiment.

An important affair took Gandhiji away to Rangoon on 11 March. Twenty days later he returned and on 3 April he and his party started for Hardwar on the occasion of the *Kumbha melā*. His students had been called upon to join the volunteer corps there. 'Our stay in Santiniketan had taught us that the scavenger's work would be our special function in India.' Gandhiji himself was anxious to meet Mahatma Munshiram, better known as Śwami Sraddha-nanda, in his Gurukul Asram there and become acquainted with his ideals.

Mahatmaji's first visit to Santiniketan has been described here in detail because few remember it nowadays and because its memory always worked as an inspiration and enlivened his subsequent visits. As a matter of fact he began calling Santiniketan his second home ever since that day. He used to come to Santiniketan just like one of its inmates, for, its association with the memories of Barodādā, Gurudev, Pearson and Andrews made it more than a mere guest-house to him.

1920. On 13 September, Gandhiji, by this time the adored 'Mahatma' of the nation, came to Santiniketan for

the second time after the special session of the Congress in Calcutta. Rabindranath was then in Europe. On his behalf, C. F. Andrews and Pandit Vidhusekhara Sastri arranged for a fitting reception for the beloved guest. The account published in the *Santiniketan Patrika* (Bhādra, 1327 B.S.) will be of interest to his future biographers.

Mahatma Gandhi arrived at the Asram on 26 Bhādra. He was accompanied by several distinguished men from all over India. There was a gathering at Bolpur station to receive the Mahatma, and the Station Road was decorated by the local people with flowers and festoons. A warm welcome was given him in the Kala-Bhavan (now Dwārik). Mahatmaji is feeling a little indisposed. He may stay here till his complete recovery. His wife and Devadas, his youngest son, are with him. The students once more presented *Vālmiki Pratibhā* for the entertainment of the guests. Moulana Saukat Ali has also come to the Asrama to meet the Mahatma.

That Jawaharlal Nehru, then a young national worker, was amongst 'the distinguished men' perhaps escaped the notice of the Patrika's reporter who, it now appears must have been only an amateur in the field. The fact is, however, of special interest today. Jawaharlal writes in his *Autobiography*:

On our way back from the Calcutta Special Congress I accompanied Gandhiji to Santiniketan on a visit to Rabindranath Tagore<sup>3</sup> and his most lovable elder brother 'Boro Dada'. We spent some days there, and I remember C. F. Andrews giving me some books which interested and influenced me greatly.

Countrywide preparations were being made for the Non-co-operation movement. It cannot be said that Santiniketan

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<sup>3</sup> Rabindranath's absence from the asrama at the time apparently escaped the attention of Pandit Nehru while he was writing this account.

remained unaffected. Under its stress university examination was abolished for a year from the school. But even then, because of Gurudev's rare patience and farsightedness, Santiniketan did not quite lose its peace. In a letter from Paris (18 September, 1920), he reminded Andrews:

I find our countrymen are furiously excited about Non-co-operation. It will grow into something like our Swadeshi movement in Bengal. Such an emotional outbreak should have been taken advantage of in starting independent organizations all over India for serving our country.

Let Mahatma Gandhi be our true leader in this; let him send his call for positive service, ask for homage in sacrifice, which has its end in love and creation. I shall be willing to sit at his feet and to do his bidding if he commands me to co-operate with my countrymen in service and love.

This advice from one whom Gandhiji had subsequently termed 'The Great Sentinel' saved Santiniketan in this period of her crisis. On his return to the Asram he proved his sincerity through the varied social and constructive activities of Sriniketan.

29 May, 1925. During his tour of Bengal Gandhiji paid his visit to Santiniketan in the middle of the summer vacation. This time Gurudev Rabindranath was present and he accorded an extremely cordial and artistic reception to the Mahatma as a great leader and friend of the Asram. It is said<sup>4</sup> that when Rabindranath showed him into a room bedecked with leaves and flowers on the first floor of the main building of the Asram (now the guest-house) Gandhiji asked: 'Why bring me to this bridal chamber? Where is the bride?' Rabindranath replied with a smile, 'Santiniketan, the ever young queen of our hearts, welcomes you'. 'But surely, she would hardly care to look twice at the old toothless pauper that I am', said Gandhiji. 'No,

<sup>4</sup> *A Sheaf of Gandhi Anecdotes* by G. Ramchandran.

our queen has loved truth and worshipped it unreservedly all these long years', was Rabindranath's reply.

Debates, discussions, disagreements set against jests, humour and friendly smiles: this is the hallowed memory of Gandhiji's stay at the Asram. In a nice photograph of Rabindranath, Andrews and Gandhiji chatting together an asramite has caught and preserved much of the joy of the occasion.

1940. On 17 February, Mahatmaji, along with Kasturba, Mahadev Desai and others, paid his fourth and last visit to Santiniketan during Gurudev's lifetime. 17 February was also the date of his first visit. Seeking Gurudev's blessings, and rest for a couple of days, he came here on his way to Malikanda. His beloved friend Charlie Andrews was lying ill in a nursing home in Calcutta. Missing him Gandhiji seemed to have missed the purpose of his visit. Notwithstanding his ill health Rabindranath went to the mango-grove. There with his own hands he garlanded Gandhiji and presented to him a short but significant address of welcome. Gandhiji gave a very moving reply to it in Hindi. Seated in the evening by the side of Rabindranath in *Uttarayana* he witnessed with rapt attention a performance of the dance-drama *Chandālikā*. Jestingly Rabindranath offered him his mud-hut *Syāmali* on condition that he should come every year to live there. Posing to be an astute barrister-at-law Gandhiji is reported to have promptly reminded his benefactor that a gift should not be conditional.

On the morning of 19 February, Mahatmaji took leave of Gurudev and the inmates of the Asram and left for Calcutta. On the eve of his departure Gurudev handed over to the Mahatma a letter which testified to his own love and care for Visva-Bharati and which carried this impassioned appeal:

. . . Accept this institution under your protection, giving it an assurance of permanence if you consider

it to be a national asset. Visva-Bharati is like a vessel which is carrying the cargo of my life's best treasure, and I hope it may claim special care from my countrymen for its preservation.

Seated in his compartment, before the train started, Gandhiji sent back the memorable reply:

. . . . Of course Visva-Bharati is a national institution. It is undoubtedly also international. You may depend upon my doing all I can in the common endeavour to assure its permanence. . . . Though I have always regarded Santiniketan as my second home, this visit has brought me nearer to it than ever before.

In the *Harijan* of 2 March, 1940, the Mahatma gave in his own words an intimate impression of this visit, where among other things he said:

The visit to Santiniketan was a pilgrimage to me.

Santiniketan is not new to me. I was first there in 1915 when it was yet taking shape, not that it is not doing so even now. Gurudev is himself growing. Old age has made no difference to the elasticity of his mind. Santiniketan will, therefore, never cease to grow so long as Gurudev's spirit broods over it. . . .

Who am I to take this institution under my protection? It carries God's protection because it is the creation of an earnest soul. It is not a show thing. Gurudev himself is international because he is truly national. Therefore all his creation is international and Visva-Bharati is the best of all. . . .

December, 1945. Once again Mahatmaji came to Santiniketan. No one could imagine that this was fated to be his last visit to the Asram. Precious is the memory of the sad and beautiful ceremony that welcomed him to the Asram for the last time. The laying of the foundation-stone of the hospital in memory of C. F. Andrews was the most important item of his programme during this visit. This

was followed by intimate discussions with the members of the staff and the heads of the various departments of Visva-Bharati, as to how Gandhiji could redeem his promise to Gurudev to do his best to preserve the 'best treasure' the Poet had left to the nation. A full record of these conversations is published elsewhere in this issue ; let us remember a significant remark that Gandhiji made on this occasion to resolve the conflict in the minds of those who failed to discover a harmony between Gurudev and Gandhiji. To them he said :

I have found no real conflict between us. I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev and myself but ended with the glorious discovery that there was none.

These words of Mahatmaji should dispel forever all darkness from the souls of the followers of these two great men.

This was Gandhiji's fifth and last visit to Santiniketan. His relation with Santiniketan, however, cannot be gauged by the number of his visits. We may here recall an episode reported by Ramananda Chattopadhyaya in the *Prabāsi* (Ashaḍ, 1346 B.S.).

Kagawa, the famous Japanese peace-maker and social worker, came to India some years ago and saw Mahatmaji. Incidentally he mentioned to Mahatmaji that he was going to Bengal to see Sir Daniel Hamilton's Gosaba. 'Not Santiniketan?' asked Mahatmaji. 'No,' replied Kagawa. 'Well, remarked Mahatmaji, 'Gosaba is Gosaba, but Santiniketan is India.'

This remark forcefully reveals the high esteem that Gandhiji had for Santiniketan. Till the very end he cherished the links that bound him to Santiniketan, where he could glimpse the beauty and serenity of the India that he so deeply loved and so devotedly served. Indeed, it was not in a flight of fancy that Sarojini Naidu declared that Santiniketan belonged as much to Mahatmaji as to Rabindranath.

## VICTORY TO THE VICTIM

The Man of faith moves on along pitiless paths strewn  
with flints over scorching sands and steep  
mountainous tracks.

They follow him, the strong and the weak, the aged  
and the young,

the rulers of realms, the tillers of the soil.

Some grow weary and footsore, some angry and  
suspicious.

They ask at every dragging step,

'How much further is the end?'

The Man of faith sings in answer ;

they scowl and shake their fists and yet they cannot  
resist him ;

the pressure of the moving mass and indefinite  
hope push them forward.

The days pass,

the ever-receding horizon tempts them with renewed  
lure of the unseen till they are sick.

Their faces harden, their curses grow louder and  
louder.

Someone from the crowd suddenly stands up  
and pointing to the leader with merciless finger  
breaks out:

'False prophet, thou hast deceived us!'

Others take up the cry one by one,

women hiss their hatred and men growl.

At last one bolder than others suddenly deals him a  
blow.

They cannot see his face, but fall upon him in a fury  
of destruction

and hit him till he lies prone upon the ground his  
life extinct.

Suddenly they become still and gasp for breath as they  
gaze at the figure lying dead.

The women sob out loud and men hide their faces in  
their hands.

A few try to slink away unnoticed,  
but their crime keeps them chained  
to their victim.

They ask each other in bewilderment,  
'Who will show us the path?'

The old man from the East bends his head and says:  
'The Victim.'

They sit still and silent.

Again speaks the old man,  
'We refused him in doubt, we killed him in anger,  
now we shall accept him in love,  
for in his death he lives in the life of us all, the  
great Victim.'

And they all stand up and mingle their voices and sing,  
'Victory to the Victim.'

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

## CONTRIBUTORS



## CONTRIBUTORS

RAJENDRA PRASAD, M.A., M.L., D.LITT.

Associated with Gandhiji in political work since 1917. Member of the All-India Congress Committee and Congress Working Committee for many years. Minister, Government of India, 1947. President, Indian National Congress, 1934-36, 1939-40 and 1947-48. President, Indian Constituent Assembly since 1946. Works: *India Divided*; *Satyagraha in Champaran*, etc.

J. B. KRIPALANI, M.A.

Lecturer, G. B. B. College, Muzaffarpur, 1912-17. Gave up post to join Gandhiji's Champaran Satyagraha. Lecturer, Benares Hindu University, 1919-20. Joined first Non-co-operation Movement in 1920. Started Gandhi Asram same year for Khadi and village work. Professor and later Principal, Gujarat Vidyapith (National University founded by Gandhiji at Ahmedabad), 1922-28. Since then known as Acharya. General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1934-46. President of the Congress, 1947. Works: *The Gandhian Way*; *The Latest Fad*; *Fateful Year*, etc.

NIRMALKUMAR BOSE, M.Sc.

Lecturer in Prehistory and Anthro-po-Geography, Calcutta University. Authority on Orissa temple architecture. Was Gandhiji's companion during Noakhali tour. Works: *Studies in Gandhism*; *Selections from Gandhi*; *Canons of Orissan Architecture*; *Cultural Anthropology*, etc.

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA, M.A., B.D. (Hartford), PH.D.

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Lecturer in Philosophy for four years. Assistant Secretary, All-India Village Industries Association,

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Wardha, 1935-45. Works: *Ramanuja*; *Capitalism, Socialism versus Villagism*, etc.

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Lecturer in Divinity, University of Durham. Contributes regularly a survey of current theological literature to the *Hibbert Journal*.

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Secretary, London Vegetarian Society. Works: *The Wisdom of Gandhi*; *Sword of Gold*, etc.

SOPHIA WADIA

Theosophist, lecturer and writer. Founder of the P.E.N. All India Centre. Editor, *The Indian P.E.N.* and *The Aryan Path*. Works: *The Brotherhood of Religions*; *Preparation for Citizenship*, etc.

SATISCHANDRA MUKERJI

Founder of Dawn Society (started 1902), a cultural association for the moral and religious education of students in Calcutta.

RALPH RICHARD KEITHAHN

American Missionary who came out to India and settled near Bangalore to do social and welfare work on the lines of Gandhiji's constructive programme. Was asked to leave India in 1942 due to his pro-Indian views and sympathy for the Indian National Congress. Closely associated with the Student Movement in India. At present carrying on development and co-operative work under the Government of Madras with his headquarters at Gandhigram in South India. Member Executive Committee, All India Village Industries Association.

S. K. GEORGE

'An Indian Christian touched to life and religion by the re-embodiment in Gandhiji of the spirit of Jesus

## CONTRIBUTORS

of Nazareth'. Had to resign his post of lecturer at Bishop's College, Calcutta, in 1932 for having expressed his sympathy with the Civil Disobedience Movement. At present Head of the Dinabandhu-Bhavana (Andrews Memorial Hall for Christian and Western Studies) at Santiniketan. Works: *Gandhiji's Challenge to Christianity*, etc.

### ETHEL MANNIN

Well-known British authoress and social worker. Works: *Confessions and Impressions*; *All Experience*; *Christianity or Chaos*; *Green Willow*; *Children of the Earth*, etc., etc.

### HENRY S. L. POLAK

Gandhiji's associate and closest co-worker in South Africa since 1904. Lived, with his wife, as part of Gandhiji's household during 1904-1914. Participated in and imprisoned during Indians' Satyagraha in South Africa. Solicitor in London since 1917. Works: *Mahatma Gandhi* (jointly with H. N. Brailsford and Lord Pethick-Lawrence).

### K. G. MASHRUWALA

Associated with Gandhiji's political and constructive work since the latter's return from South Africa. Editor, *Harijan*, since April, 1948. Was President of the Gandhi Seva Sangh and organised constructive work until that body was dissolved by Gandhiji. A faithful interpreter of the Gandhian philosophy. Works: *Practical Non-Violence*, etc.

### MAUDE ROYDEN SHAW

Social service in Liverpool and elsewhere followed by energetic work in the women's suffrage movement. Assistant Preacher in the City Temple, 1917-20. Started Fellowship Services in Kensington and later at the Guild House. Made a Companion of Honour in

1930. Has the 'unusual experience of having been a pacifist, having ceased to be one (in the absolute sense) and still having the conviction that Gandhiji was fundamentally right'.

REGINALD REYNOLDS

Social worker. Visited India in 1929-30 when he acted as Gandhiji's personal messenger to Lord Irwin on an important occasion during the latter's Viceroyalty. Has devoted, along with his wife (Ethel Mannin), much time and resources in personal efforts to relieve suffering in Germany and Austria and to build up the goodwill destroyed by the War and the subsequent occupation by the victorious Allies. Works: *White Sahibs in Asia*, etc.

PRIYARANJAN SEN, M.A., P.R.S.

Lecturer in English, Calcutta University. Long associated with the Bengal branch of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. Provincial Secretary, the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Rendered into Bengali Gandhiji's post-prayer discourses in Delhi for the All India Radio. Works: *Modern Oriya Literature; Western Influence on Bengali Literature*, etc.

GURDIAL MALLIK, B.A.

Well-known teacher, social worker and journalist. Has been associated, one way or the other, with the activities of India's three great contemporaries—Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and C. F. Andrews. Works: *Hound of the Heart*, etc.

MIRA BEHN (Miss Madeleine Slade)

Daughter of Admiral Sir Edmond Slade. Her interest in music and admiration for Beethoven's works led her to Romain Rolland, which, in its turn, led her to Gandhiji. Left Europe for India and joined Gandhiji's Asram at Sabarmati in November, 1925. Accompanied

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Gandhiji to London in 1931 for the Second Round Table Conference. Suffered successive terms of imprisonment during India's freedom struggles. Established a small asram and cattle-development centre in the Rishikesh forest area in 1947, now known as *Pashulok*.

### AMRIT KAUR

Held various offices in all-India organisations for women since 1930. Member, Central Advisory Board of Education since its inception till 1942 and again from 1946. Member, Indian Delegation to UNESCO in 1945 and 1946. Acted as Gandhiji's Secretary from time to time during the period 1936-46. Minister for Health, Government of India since 1947. Works: *To Women*, etc.

### J. C. KUMARAPPA, B.Sc. (Lond.), M.A. (Columbia)

Professor, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, 1929-31. In editorial charge of *Young India*, 1930. Member and Secretary, All India Debt Inquiry Committee, 1931. Secretary, All India Village Industries Association, 1934-48 and at present its President. Works: *Public Finance and Our Poverty*; *Why the Village Movement*; *Practice and Precepts of Jesus*; *Gandhian Economics*; *Economics of Permanence*, etc.

### SRIMAN NARAYAN AGARWAL, M.A. (Cal.), M.A. (Allah.), F.R. Econ. S. (Lond)

Principal, Govindram Sakseria College of Commerce, Wardha. Toured all over America preaching the message of *sarvodaya*. Works: *The Gandhian Plan*; *Medium of Instruction*; *Gandhian Plan Re-affirmed*, etc.

### ALDOUS HUXLEY

Noted British author. Works: *Point Counter Point*; *Eyeless in Gaza*; *Perennial Philosophy*; *Ends and Means*; *Ape and Essence*, etc., etc.

HORACE G. ALEXANDER

Professor for over 20 years at Selly Oak College, Woodbrooke, Birmingham. Visited India in 1927-28, 1930 and 1942. Returned to this country in 1946 at Gandhiji's instance to work in the Indian Section of the Society of Friends. Moving spirit behind the proposal for holding a World Peace Meeting in India. Works: *The Indian Firmament* ; *India Since Cripps*.

ARTHUR MOORE

Managing Editor, *The Statesman*, Calcutta, 1933-42. Member, Indian Legislative Assembly, 1926-33; Leader, European Group, 1932-33. President, Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society, 1939-43. A former critic of Gandhiji, he helped him in many ways during the Cripps negotiations and communal troubles in Delhi. Undertook a fast along with Gandhiji on the latter occasion. Is writing a series of articles on Gandhiji's last days. At present Editor, *Thought*, New Delhi. Works: *This Our War*, etc.

G. STEPHENS SPINKS, M.A., PH.D.

Eminent Unitarian who succeeded Dr. L. P. Jacks in the editorship of the *Hibbert Journal*.

HUMAYUN KABIR, M.A. (Oxon.)

After a brilliant academic career at Calcutta and Oxford served as a Lecturer in Philosophy in the Calcutta University. Joint Founder of Krishak Proja Party and for many years a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. Was actively associated with the All India Railwaymen's Federation. Author of a treatise on Kant and Aesthetics. Editor, *Chaturanga*. At present Joint Educational Adviser to the Government of India. Represented India at the Beirut Session of the UNESCO. Works: *Muslim Politics*; *Saratchandra Chatterjee* ; *Cabbages and Kings* ; *Marxabad* ; *Swapnasadh* (poems) ; *Sathi* (poems) ; *Men and Rivers*, etc., etc.

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Head of the Sanskrit Department, University of Paris and one of the Editors of *Journal Asiatique*.

### JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

Minister of the Community Church of New York. Eminent scholar, social reformer, religious leader and champion of world brotherhood. Devoted friend of India. Was a personal friend of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Visited India during early winter of 1947-48 as Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Visiting Professor under the Watumull Foundation. A pacifist with the courage of his convictions, his creed of non-violence found powerful confirmation when he first heard of Gandhiji. Proclaimed Gandhi as 'the greatest man in the world' in a sermon in April, 1921. Works: *New Wars for Old* ; *Patriotism is not Enough* ; *Rethinking Religion* ; *The Affirmation of Immortality*, etc., etc.

### SARVAPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN, M.A., D.Litt., LL.D.

Indian Ambassador to the USSR. Was King George V Professor of Philosophy, Calcutta University ; Upton Lecturer in Comparative Religion, Manchester College, Oxford ; Hibbert Lecturer and Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions, Oxford University. Served as Vice-Chancellor and Sir Sayaji Rao Professor of Indian Civilization and Culture, Benares Hindu University. Chairman, Indian Universities Commission. Indian Representative on UNESCO, 1946 and later elected its Chairman. Works: *Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* ; *Indian Philosophy* ; *An Idealist View of Life* ; *East and West in Religion* ; *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* ; *The Vedanta According to Samkara and Ramanuja*, etc., etc.

### SATISCHANDRA DAS GUPTA

Pioneer of chemical industry in India ; helped to make the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works

Ltd. one of the largest manufacturing concerns in the country. Renounced his profession to join the Non-co-operation Movement in 1921. Organised Khadi work in Bengal and founded the Khadi Pratisthan. Led Satyagraha and Harijan movements in Bengal, 1930. Has suffered several terms of imprisonment. Conducted relief and rehabilitation work in famine-stricken areas of Bengal. After Noakhali havoc (October 1946) accompanied Gandhiji there and worked as his closest associate during the historic trial of non-violence conducted at that place. Has since settled there and engaged himself in the rehabilitation of the riot-devastated people. Did much to propagate Gandhiji's ideals in Bengal by translating a large number of his works into Bengali; also helped to popularise Hindi in Bengal by translating 'Tulsidas' *Ramcharit-manas* into Bengali. Works: *Home and Village Doctor*; *The Cow in India*, etc.

#### JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Educated at Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge. Barrister-at-Law of the Inner Temple, London. Advocate, Allahabad High Court, 1916. Secretary, Home Rule League, 1918. Member, All India Congress Committee since 1918. General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1929. Thrice elected President of the Indian National Congress. Suffered imprisonment nine times. President, Visva-Bharati. Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Commonwealth Relations and Scientific Research, Government of India. Works: *Autobiography*; *Glimpses of World History*; *Discovery of India*, etc., etc.

#### KRISHNA KRIPALANI, B.A., BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

Left Bar to join Civil Disobedience Movement. After release took up service in the Visva-Bharati University. Editor, *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, 1935-46. Took up administrative work in the office of the All India

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Congress Committee in 1946. Was appointed First Secretary in the Indian Embassy at Rio de Janeiro. Works: *Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru*.

### PYARELAL NAYYAR

Non-co-operated as a post-graduate student in 1920. Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi for a long time. Editor, *Harijan* upto February 1948. At present engaged in writing authoritative biography of Gandhiji and doing rehabilitation work in riot-devastated Noakhali. Works: *The Epic Fast ; The Status of Princes*, etc.

### NIRMALCHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAYA, M.A., B.L., B.T.

An alumnus of the Santiniketan School. Later joined Santiniketan as a teacher of literature in 1938. Has done valuable work in editing some of Rabindranath Tagore's works, including a well-documented edition of *Jivan-Smriti (Reminiscences)*. Has produced several useful chronicles dealing with the life and work of prominent personalities connected with Santiniketan, including Maharshi Devendranath Tagore. Works: *Akashganga* (a book of poems).



